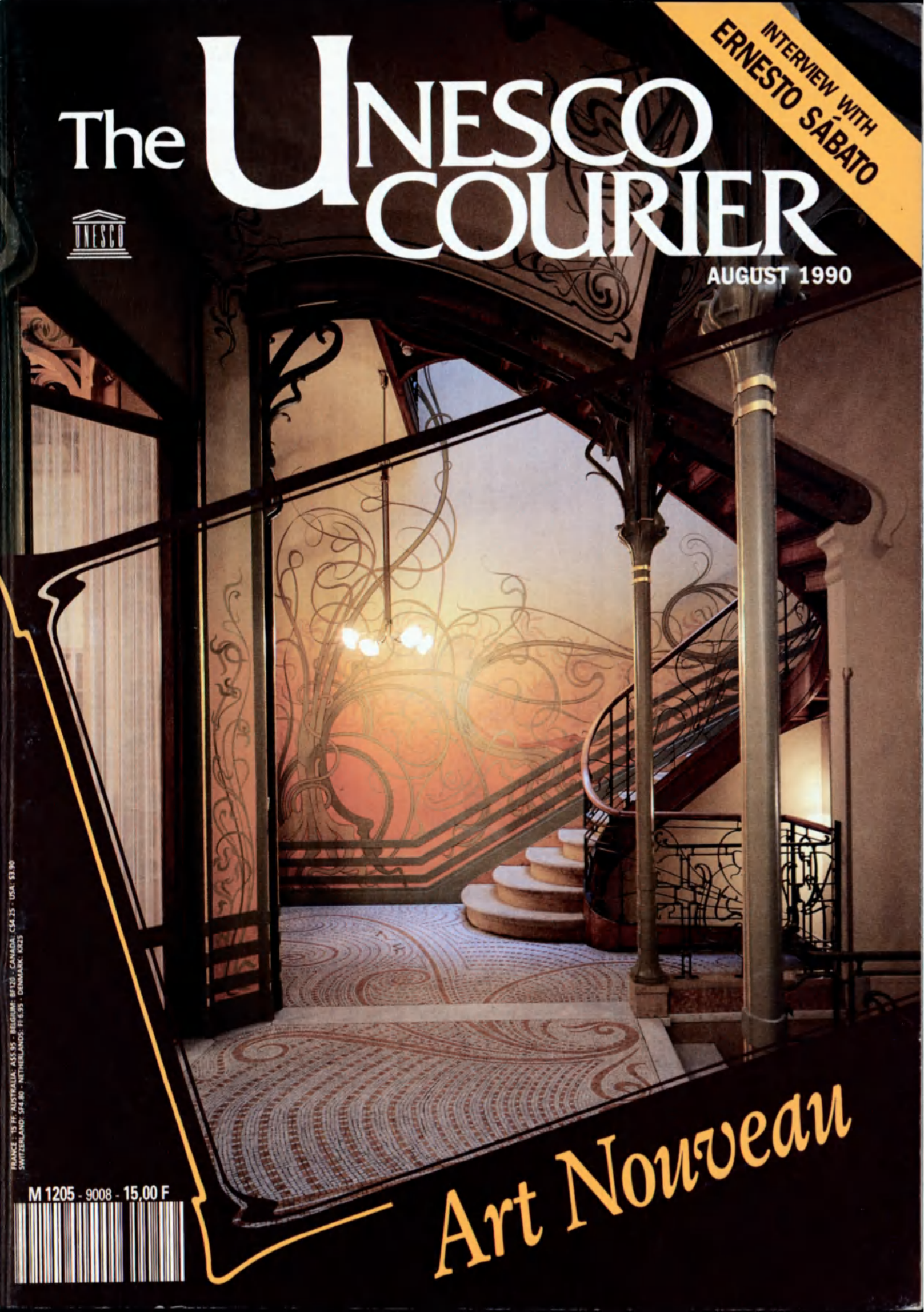
The UNESCO COURIER

AUGUST 1990

INTERVIEW WITH ERNESTO SÁBATO



Art Nouveau

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encounters

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

Canoes for Indian visitors

These terracotta Indian canoes were made by children aged between six and twelve at a workshop held at the Arts Centre in Amiens (France).They were offered as a tribute to a group of North American Indian film-makers taking part in the VII International Film Festival, Amiens, 1987. Touched by the children's enthusiasm, several of the film-makers spent a day introducing them to Indian culture through songs, dances and stories.

CONTENTS

10

ART NOUVEAU

ART NOUVEAU:
AN INTERNATIONAL AESTHETIC
by Arthur Gillette 10

THE ETERNAL BLOOM OF ART NOUVEAU
by Manfred Speidel 13

THE FARAWAY SOURCES: JAPAN
A FRESH LOOK AT TRADITIONAL FORMS
by Hiroyasu Fujioka 18

THE FARAWAY SOURCES: EGYPT
FROM HORUS TO *AÏDA*
by Mona Zaalouk 20

THE HOUSE AS A TOTAL WORK OF ART
by Cécile Dulière 22

FROM FANTASY TO FUNCTIONALISM
by Andreas Lehne 27

NORTHERN LIGHTS
by Maria Nashtshokina and Boris Kirikov 32

MODERNIST BARCELONA
by Albert Garcia Espuche 35

A CUBAN MYTHOLOGY
by Enrique Capablanca 37

ARGENTINA: AN AESTHETIC REVOLUTION
by Jorge O. Gazaneo 39

4

Interview with
ERNESTO SÁBATO

41

IN BRIEF... 41

HERITAGE
Unesco and 'architecture with a smile'
by Hans-Dieter Dyroff 42

REFLECTIONS
'A terrifying and edible beauty'
by Ezio Godoli 44

ENVIRONMENT
S.O.S lemurs!
A new biosphere reserve in Madagascar
by Edouard Bailby 46

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR 49

FORUM
The International African Institute
A 'hunger for books'
by Peter Lloyd 50

Cover: entrance hall of the Hôtel Tassel, Brussels, by Victor Horta, 1893.

Back cover: interior detail, Igumnov residence, Moscow, by Nikolaï Pozdeiev, 1892.

Today there are no more unexplored continents, unknown seas or mysterious islands. But while we can overcome the physical barriers to exploration, the barriers of mutual ignorance between different peoples and cultures have in many cases still not been dismantled.

A modern Ulysses can voyage to the ends of the earth. But a different kind of Odyssey now beckons—an exploration of the world's many cultural landscapes, the ways of life of its different peoples and their outlook on the world in which they live.

It is such an Odyssey that the *Unesco Courier* proposes to its readers. Each month contributors of different nationalities provide from different cultural and professional standpoints an authoritative treatment of a theme of universal interest. The compass guiding this journey through the world's cultural landscapes is respect for the dignity of man everywhere.

Ernesto Sábato

A sense of wonder

One of the greatest living writers in Spanish, the Argentine novelist and essayist Ernesto Sábato analyses what he sees as the spiritual crisis of our time

You have written many essays, notably a collection entitled Hombres y Engranajes *(1951; "Men and Gears"), on the dehumanizing effects of science and technology. How did a scientist like yourself come to see things in this light?*

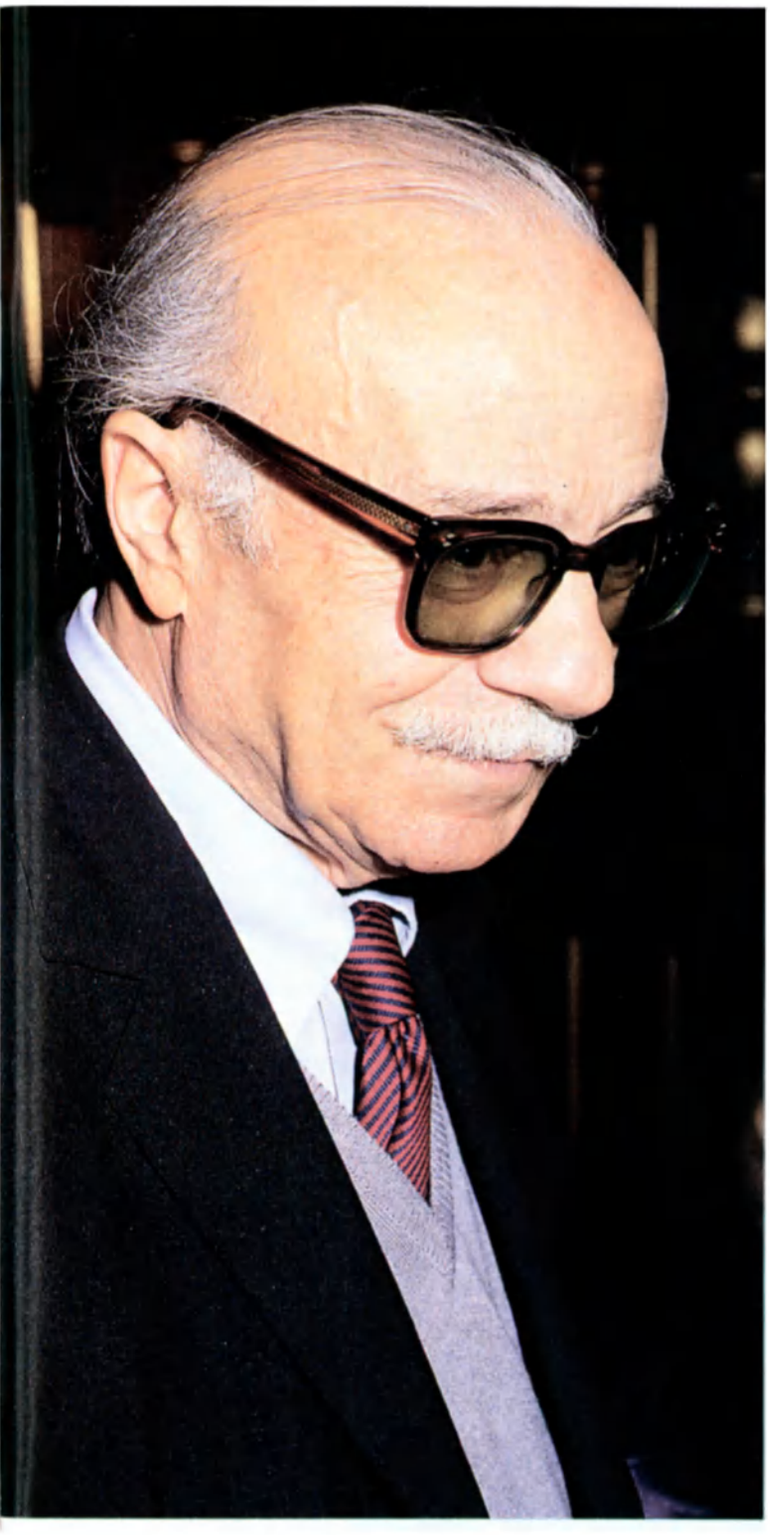
— Although I studied physics and mathematics, disciplines which offered me a kind of abstract and ideal refuge in a "platonic paradise" far from the chaos of the world, I soon realized that the blind faith that some scientists have in "pure" thought, in reason and in Progress (usually with a capital "P") made them overlook and even despise such essential aspects of human life as the unconscious and the myths which lie at the origin of artistic expression, in short, the "hidden" side of human nature. All that was missing in my purely scientific work—the Mr. Hyde that every Dr. Jekyll needs if he is to be a complete individual—I found in German romanticism and, above all, in existentialism and surrealism. Lifting my eyes from my logarithms and sinusoids, I looked on the human face, from which I have never since looked away.

Some great contemporary writers have managed to reconcile science and creativity...

— That may be so, but it does not lessen my belief that our era is strongly marked by the opposition between science and the humanities, which today has become irreconcilable. Since the Enlightenment and the days of the Encyclopaedists, and above all since the advent of positivism, science has withdrawn to a kind of Olympian retreat, cut off from humanity. The absolute sovereignty of Science and Progress over the greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has reduced the individual to the status of a cog in a gigantic machine. Capitalist and Marxist theorists alike have contributed to the propagation of this sadly distorted vision in which the individual is melted into the mass and the mystery of the soul is reduced to physically quantifiable emissions of radiation.

Yet, even in the nineteenth century, there was a strong philosophical current that questioned the monumental rational edifice constructed by Hegel, the weight of which crushed the individual. We are thinking of Kierkegaard, about whom you have written extensively.

— Kierkegaard was the first thinker to question whether science should take precedence over life and to answer firmly that life comes first. Since then, the *object* deified by science has been dislodged as the centre of the universe and been replaced by the *subject*, the man of flesh and blood. This led on to Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger, to twentieth-century existentialist philosophy in which man is no longer an "impartial" scientific observer but a "self" clothed in flesh, the "being destined to die" of whom I have written and who is the source of tragedy and metaphysics, the highest forms of literary expression.



But not the only ones...

— Of course not, but to my mind they are the most important because of their tragic, transcendental dimension. One has only to think of Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground,* that bloody diatribe in which, with almost demented hatred, he denounced the modern age and its cult of progress.

We are right into literature now...

— Yes, because the novel can express things that are beyond the scope of philosophy or the essay—such as our darkest uncertainties about God, destiny, the meaning of life, hope. The novel answers all these questions, not simply by expressing ideas, but through myth and symbol, by drawing on the magical properties of thought. All the same, many of the characters in novels are just as real as reality itself. Is Don Quixote "unreal"? If reality bears any relationship to durability, then this character born of Cervantes' imagination is much more real than the objects that surround us, for he is immortal.

So literature interprets reality?

— Fortunately, art and poetry have never claimed to dissociate the rational from the irrational, the sensibility from the intellect, dream from reality. Dream, mythology and art have a common source in the unconscious—they reveal a world which could have no other form of expression. It is absurd to ask artists to explain their work. Can you imagine Beethoven analysing his symphonies or Kafka explaining what he really meant in *The Trial*? The notion that everything can be "rationally" explained is the hallmark of the Western positivist mentality typical of the modern age, an age which overestimates the value of science, reason and logic. Yet this form of culture represents only a brief moment in human history.

I believe in art, dialogue, liberty and the dignity of the individual human being

You seem to consider our age to be the final phase in a line of modern thought beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century and ending in our own times.

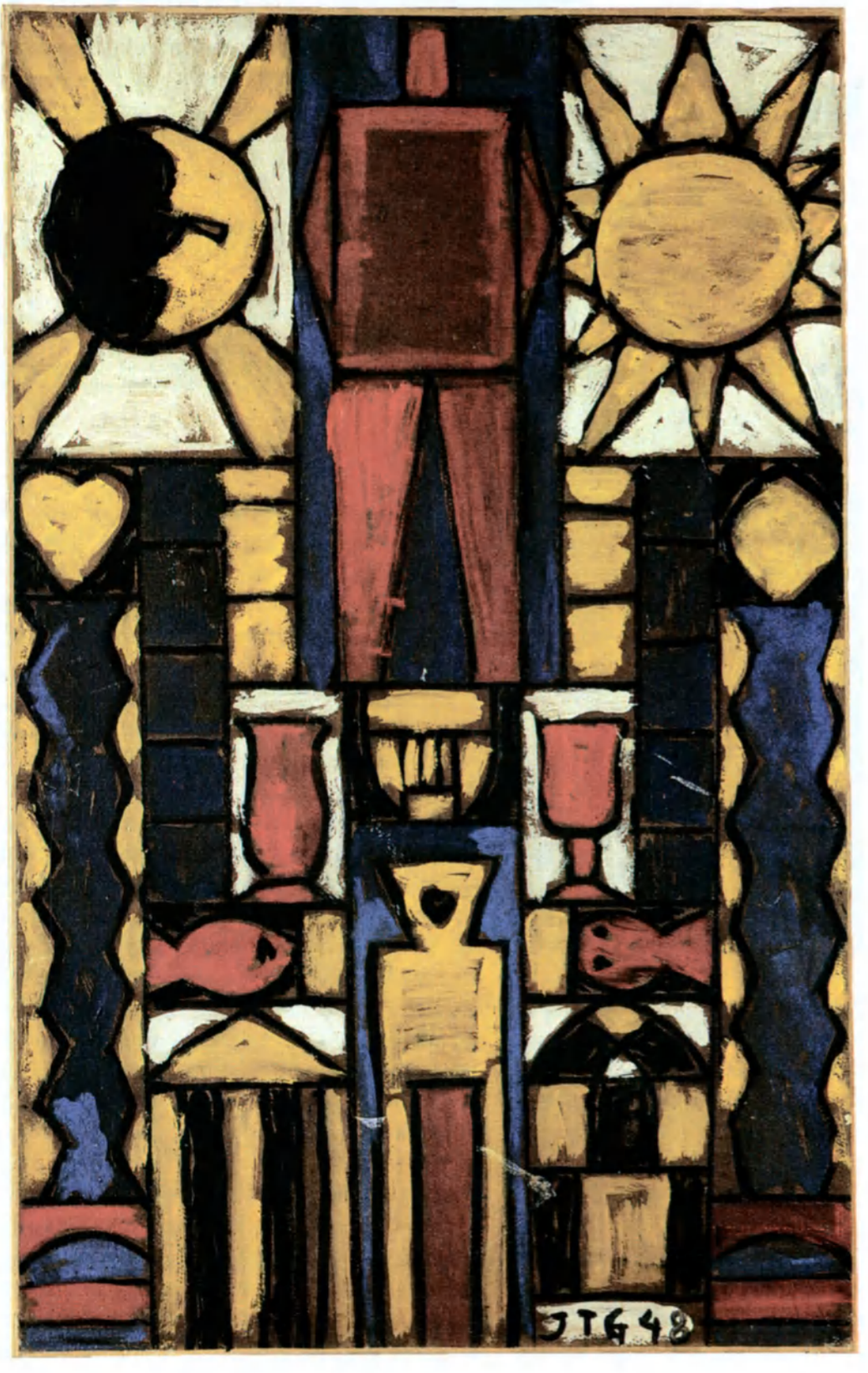
— Literary fashions should not be confused with the major trends of thought. In the vast and tragic movement of ideas there are advances and retreats, sideways excursions and counter-currents. It is clear, however, that we are witnessing the end of an era. We are living through a crisis of civilization in which there is a kind of confrontation between the eternal forces of passion and order, of pathos and ethos, of the Dionysian and the Apollonian.

Can this crisis be resolved?

— The only way we can escape from this harrowing crisis is by snatching living, suffering man from the gigantic machine in which he is enmeshed and which is crushing him. But it must not be forgotten, at the dawn of a new millennium, that an age does not end at the same moment for

everyone. In the nineteenth century, when Progress was triumphant, writers and thinkers such as Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard were not "of their time", for already, despite the optimism of scientists, they had a presentiment of the catastrophe that was in store for us and which Kafka, Sartre and Camus were to portray.

Is that why you reject the concept of "progress" in art?
— Art can no more progress than a dream can, and for the same reasons. Are the nightmares of our contemporaries any more advanced than those of the prophets of the Bible? We can say that Einstein's mathematics are superior to those of Archimedes, but not that Joyce's *Ulysses* is superior to Homer's *Odyssey*. One of Proust's characters is convinced that Debussy is a better composer than Beethoven for the simple reason that he was born after him. There's no need to be a musicologist to appreciate Proust's satirical irony in this passage. Every artist aspires towards what may be



Design for stained-glass window, oil on cardboard, by the Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García.

For a human being, learning means taking part, discovering and inventing

called an absolute, or towards a fragment of the Absolute, with a capital "A", whether he be an Egyptian sculptor in the time of Ramses II, a Greek artist of the classical age, or Donatello. This is why there is no progress in art, only change and new departures that are due not only to the sensibilities of each artist but also to the tacit or explicit vision of an epoch or a culture. One thing at least is certain; no artist is better placed than another to attain these absolute values simply because he was born later.

So you do not believe that there can be a universal aesthetic?
— The relativity of history is reflected in aesthetics. Each period has a dominant value—religious, economic or metaphysical —which colours all the others. In the eyes of the people of a religious culture preoccupied with the eternal, Ramses II's hieratic and geometric colossus would encapsulate more "truth" than a totally realistic statue. History shows us that beauty and truth change from one period to the next, that black culture and white culture are based on different criteria. The reputations of writers, artists and musicians are subject to swings of the pendulum.

There is no justification, therefore, for speaking of the superiority of one culture over another?
— Today we have come a long way from conceited positivist certainties and from "enlightened thought" in general. Following the work of Levy-Bruhl, who after forty years of research admitted in all honesty that he could see no "progression" in the move from magical to logical thought and that the two had inevitably to coexist in man, all cultures must be seen as deserving equal respect. We have finally come round to rendering justice to what were once condescendingly called "primitive cultures".

You are, nevertheless, dissatisfied with the education currently available in schools and universities. What do you think it lacks?
— When I was young, I was made to swallow a mountain of facts that I forgot as quickly as I could. In geography, for example, I barely remember the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, and perhaps that's only because they are often mentioned in the newspapers. Someone once said that culture is what is left when you have forgotten everything else. For a human being, learning means taking part, discovering and inventing. If people are to advance, they must form their own opinions, even if, at times, this means making mistakes and having to go back to the beginning again. They need to explore new paths and experiment with new methods. Otherwise we shall, at best, merely produce a race of scholars or, at worst, of bookworms or of parrots regurgitating ready-made phrases from books. The book is a wonderful tool, provided that it does not become an obstacle that prevents us from pursuing our own research.

How do you see the educator's role?
— Etymologically speaking, to educate means to develop, to bring out what exists in embryonic form, to realize potential. This "labour", this delivery by the teacher is rarely fully accomplished, and this perhaps is the origin of all the faults of our education systems. Students must be made to ask themselves questions, and be convinced of their own ignorance and of ours, so that they are prepared not only to ask questions but to think for themselves, even if they disagree with us. It is also very important for them to be able to make mistakes and for us to accept questions and approaches that may seem odd. Given this state of mind, students will understand that reality is infinitely more complex and mysterious than the small area encompassed by our knowledge. Everything else will follow automatically. This is what gives rise to questionings and to certainties, the mixture of tradition and innovation that constitutes the cultural dynamic. As Kant said, people should not be taught philosophy, they should be taught to philosophize. This is the method of Plato's "Dialogues", based on direct, spontaneous exchange, in the course of which questions emerge from our awareness of our fundamental ignorance.

Can you give us a specific example?
— A long time ago, I travelled through Patagonia in a jeep with a forester who told me how much the forest was receding with each successive forest fire. He told me of the defensive role played by cypress trees, which he compared to the stoical heroes of an army rearguard since they sacrifice themselves to delay the spread of a fire and to protect the other trees. This made me wonder what the teaching of geography could be like if it were linked to the struggle between species, the conquest of the oceans and of the continents, and to the history of mankind, which is pathetically dependent upon the terrestrial environment. In this way the pupil would get the idea of a true adventure, of a thrilling battle against the hostile forces of Nature and of history. Far from the dead weight of encyclopaedic knowledge, from dusty volumes and ready-made ideas, knowledge thus perpetually renewed would give each pupil the feeling of discovering and participating in an age-old story. For example, to engrave indelibly on students' minds the complicated geography of the American continent, as a lived-through rather than a book-learned experience, would not the best way be to teach it through the adventures of great

We have to kindle astonishment at the profound mysteries of the universe

explorers such as Magellan or conquistadores such as Cortés? We should be formed, not informed. As Montaigne said, "Learning by heart is not learning". What an exciting manual of geography and ethnology for teenagers Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* would make! We have to kindle astonishment at the profound mysteries of the universe. Everything in the universe is astonishing if you think about it. But familiarity has made us blasé and nothing astonishes us any more. We have to rediscover a sense of wonder.

You even recommend "back to front" teaching, starting with the present and reaching back into the past.

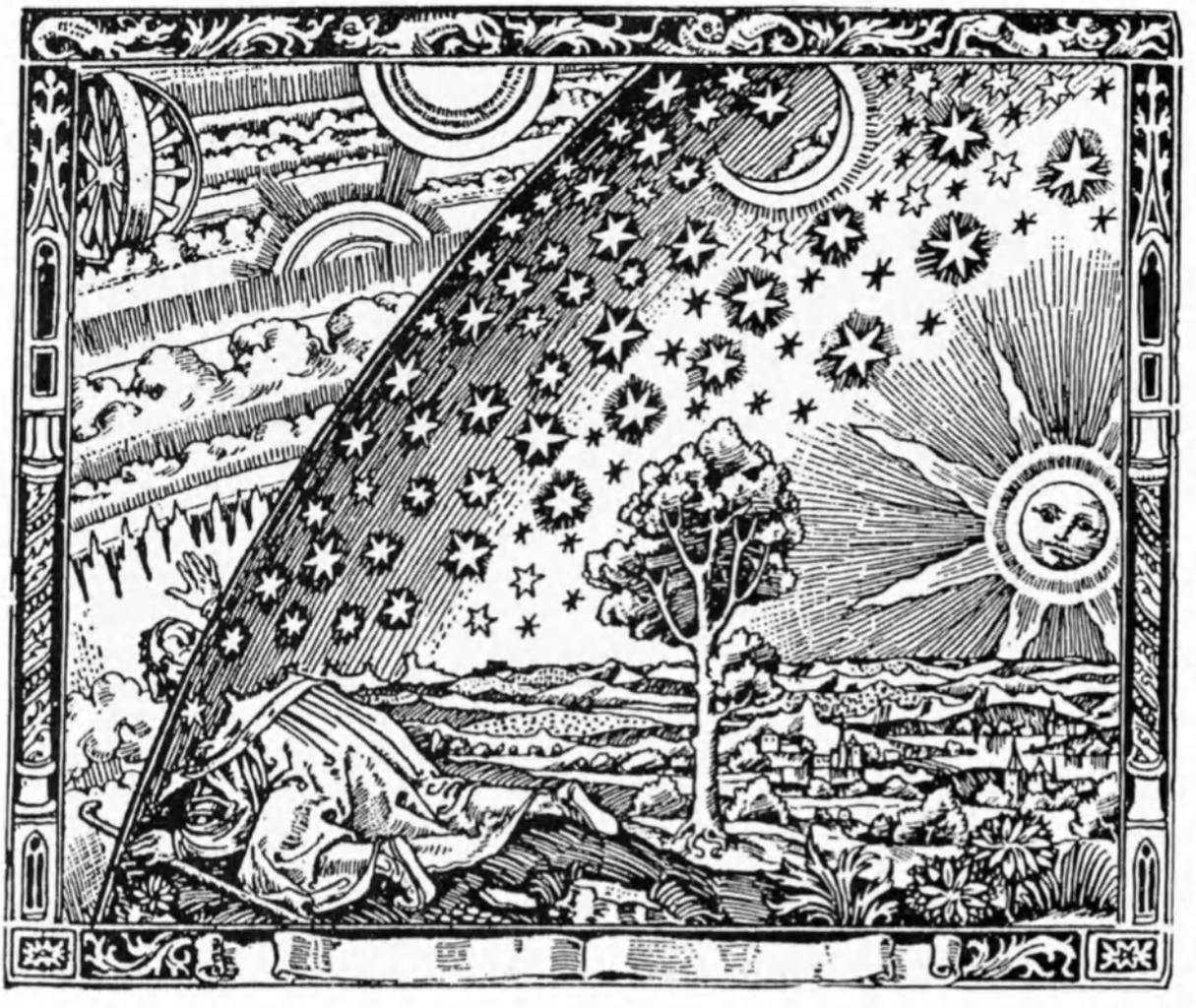
— I believe that the best way to interest young people in literature is to start with contemporary authors, whose language and concerns are closer to the students' own hopes and fears. Only later can they really become interested in what Homer or Cervantes wrote about love and death, hope and despair, solitude and heroism. The same could be done with history by tracing back to the roots of current problems.

It is also a mistake to try to teach everything. Only a few key episodes and problems, enough to provide a structure, should be taught. Few books should be used, but they should be read with passion. This is the only way to avoid making reading seem like a walk through a cemetery of dead words. Reading is only valid if it strikes a chord in the reader's mind. There is a kind of pseudo-encyclopaedic teaching, invariably associated with book-learning, which is a form of death. As if there were no culture before Gutenberg!

For years you have been pointing out the risks inherent in nuclear weapons, in the arms race and in ideological confrontation throughout the world. Aren't the upheavals of recent years, and in particular of recent months, taking some of the force out of this message?

— I'm not so sure about that. First of all, the proliferation

Wood engraving, anonymous, 16th century.



The Temple, 1949, oil on canvas by the Belgian artist Paul Delvaux.

of nuclear weapons is a fact. Many countries already have their own atomic "mini-bombs" and a chain reaction starting with some irresponsible terrorist action cannot be discounted. But this is only the purely "physical" aspect of the question, monstrous though it is. What really worries me is the spiritual catastrophe facing our era, which is the sad outcome of the repression of the forces of the unconscious in contemporary society. I see evidence of this in the proliferation of all kinds of protesting minorities, as well as in our collective history. We live in an anguished, neurotic, unstable age, hence the frequency of psychosomatic disorders, the upsurge in violence and in the use of drugs. This is a philosophical rather than a police matter. Until quite recently the "peripheral" regions of the world were unaffected by this phenomenon. In the East for example, as well as in Africa and in Oceania, mythological and philosophical traditions maintained a certain harmony between man and the world. The abrupt, unchecked irruption of Western values and technology has wreaked havoc, just as, during the Industrial Revolution, the mill-owners of Manchester swamped with their cheap cotton goods peoples who knew how to produce exquisite textiles. This mental catastrophe is leading us towards a terrifying psychological and spiritual explosion which will give rise to a wave of suicides and scenes of hysteria and collective madness. Ancient traditions cannot be replaced by the transistor industry.

Do you see nothing positive in the balance-sheet?

— Yes, perhaps, but frankly I suspect that I belong to a race that is on the road to extinction. I believe in art, dialogue, liberty and the dignity of the individual human being. But who is interested in such nonsense today? Dialogue has given way to insult and liberty to political prisons. What difference is there between a left-wing and a right-wing police state? As if there could be good or bad torturers! I must be a reactionary because I still believe in dull, mediocre democracy, the only regime which, after all, allows one to think freely and to prepare the way for a better reality. ■

Art Nouveau: an international

BY ARTHUR GILLETTE

POMPOSITY of intent and orthodoxy of style—these were the main traits of European architecture against which Art Nouveau rose up towards the end of the last century. It was a time of rapid urban growth, when the rich wanted to show off their newly-acquired wealth in town houses and other architectural statements that took themselves so seriously that they seemed heartless. Art Nouveau, in contrast, was a vision that sprang straight from the heart as a rejection of the grey uniformization of the environment: of dwellings, furniture, tableware and other artefacts that strongly shape the ways in which people live and feel about their daily lives.

Art Nouveau expressed nostalgia for Nature and the past, for the non-urban and the non-modern, for the anti-rational swirls of vines and flower stems, the rough texture of pine cones, and more generally for pre-industrial asymmetry. It also grew in tune with the medieval longings that so marked the aesthetics of the late nineteenth century, and were often connected with movements of national revival. But Art Nouveau also looked ahead, happily seizing the materials of its day and proving itself to be a force for ingenious innovation. Did stone attest to the solidity and incomes of the wealthy, whose pomposity Art Nouveau mocked? The new style flaunted its creativity by making this staid material come alive with turbulent vegetation, mythical beasts and human beings with expressions so pure they seem to pre-date the very notion of sin. Art Nouveau worked stone as though it were clay, and also embraced new media such as polychrome glazing, wrought iron, exposed steel, and glass (stained or futuristically sworled), often in astonishing and unprecedented combinations in the same work, be it a house or a piece of furniture.

In terms of inspiration and impact, the Art Nouveau vision also looked outwards. Japanese pictorial treatment of Nature was an explicitly recognized source, and *japonisme* was seldom far from the minds of many Art Nouveau practitioners. Moghul influence can also be seen (in certain towers, for instance), and some Art Nouveau exponents in Central Europe drew on references from further to the east.

And what of impact? There is today a widespread misconception according to which Art Nouveau was an overwhelmingly European expression, with some minor overflow reaching the shores of North America. Nothing could be further from the truth. After flowering in the Old World—from Helsinki to Rome, from Moscow to Paris—the seeds of Art Nouveau spread far and wide on the winds of what turned out to be the first truly international architecture and design movement of our century. An indigenous and vigorous branch sprang up in the United States (whose influence returned to Europe), while the Catalan Modernist variant *(Modernismo)* disembarked in Cuba (where it was "tropicalized", in cigar box labels for example), and Belgians and Italians built sumptuous Art Nouveau villas in Argentina and Chile respectively. The movement also made its way to North Africa, Turkey and Japan.

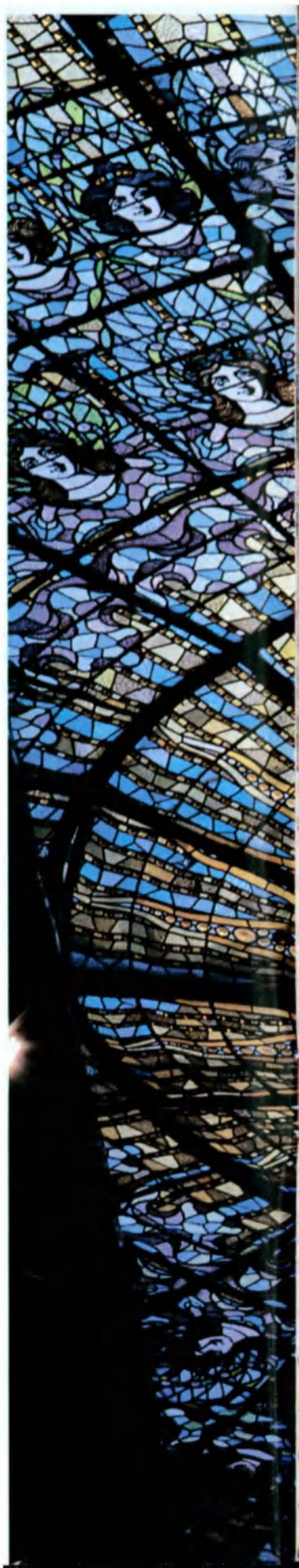
In its international embrace, as well as its innovative choice and use of materials and forms, the Art Nouveau vision was intimately linked with its epoch. One expression of this, and a further indictment of stolid pomposity, was the movement's sense of humour and whimsy. A widespread feature was the omega-shaped door, which might be interpreted as a happy mouth: Art Nouveau's approach has understandably been called "architecture with a smile". The horror of the First World War struck the movement a death blow.

With its swirls and humour replaced in the 1920s by Art Deco's angular obsession with (apparent) functionality, Art Nouveau began its trek through the wilderness. And still today it is mocked, despised, or simply ignored in many quarters. At present, there is cause for serious concern about the fate of Art Nouveau ornaments and even entire buildings in Dublin, Moscow, Paris, Tunis and Valparaiso, to cite but five cities among many others where Art Nouveau creations are threatened.

Yet the present state and prospects of Art Nouveau are contradictory. On the one hand, its buildings continue to be torn down or simply left to rot; on the other, there is growing international recognition that Art Nouveau has an intrinsic and timeless value, that it should be viewed as part and parcel of humanity's architectural and stylistic heritage, and consequently should be protected and preserved.

In the last twenty years, Art Nouveau has come back into fashion. Already in the 1970s in some European cities Art Nouveau décors were being designed for certain new restaurants and shops. In Glasgow, designated Cultural Capital of Europe 1990 by the European Community, a "House for an Art Lover" designed by the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) is at long last being built. Perhaps Art Nouveau, born on the eve of the twentieth century, will enjoy a revival on the eve of the twenty-first. ■

ARTHUR GILLETTE is editor-in-chief of Unesco's international quarterly *Museum*.



Stained-glass skylight (detail), auditorium of the Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona, by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, 1905-1908.

aesthetic

Above, Hungarian postcard, c. 1900.
Right, stained-glass window (detail) of a Brussels apartment building.

The eternal bloom of Art Nouveau

BY MANFRED SPEIDEL

ANYONE who has ever seen dried flowers and leaves that have been pressed for years between the pages of a book and remembers how the faded petals, leaves and stems were twisted and entwined in a two-dimensional pattern should be able to visualize some of the favourite decorative motifs used by Art Nouveau artists to decorate the façades of buildings.

Flowers and plants depicted in this way are quite different from the naturalistic flower pictures painted by late nineteenth-century artists who made pastiches of Gothic or Renaissance ornamentation. Often enclosed within a frame, Art Nouveau plants are stylized, they are geometrical in shape or their proportions are so different from those of real plants as to be almost unrecognizable. The graphic effect is invariably surprising. The images have a pent-up vitality so explosive that they seem ready to burst out of their frames.

Anyone who has observed the world of plants is sure to have noticed how twigs are thicker where they part from the branch and at the bud; how branches twist and turn to form complex concave and convex patterns; how rocks are sometimes embraced by an overgrowth of roots. Using moulded plaster or cast iron, exponents of Art Nouveau like the French architect Hector Guimard transformed such natural sculptures into architectural forms so ambiguous that they might equally well have been inspired by pictures of bones and muscles in anatomical textbooks. These artists would take the functional aspect of walls and other architectural features as the starting point for the creation of organic forms, just as a pearl grows around a grain of sand in an oyster or a branch grows around an obstacle.

Art Nouveau artists and architects were also fascinated by the way in which the tendrils of climbing plants such as pumpkins spiral around a support. Using the elasticity and tensile strength of wrought iron they produced such creeper-like effects in their designs for stair railings, lamps and other features of interior decoration. In the houses he designed in Brussels, Victor Horta combined the standards and other structural components of electric lamps with more flexible supports and wiring to make a lattice of sinuous interwoven lines.

The influence of the Far East

The inspiration for using plant images in this way and transforming them into works of art came from Japanese prints and Japanese and Chinese calligraphy, which began to appear on the Western art market in the 1860s. European artists were excited by the skill with which Oriental artist-calligraphers drew complex characters with ink and brush, and by the balance they achieved between black ideograms and white background. Victor Horta (in his use of woodwork with wrought iron) and Henry van de Velde (in his early designs for chairs) were among the brilliant exponents of this kind of balance between figure and background.

This method of transforming flat surfaces was also used by Horta to break up structural elements and dissolve the heavy monumental wall structures of traditional European architecture so

Above, detail of gilt bronze plate by Hector Guimard, 1909. Right, "Waterlily" lamp in chased gilt bronze from a pair created by Louis Majorelle in collaboration with Daum brothers glassworks, 1905. Below right, stair railing, Folkwang Museum, Hagen (Fed. Rep. of Germany), by Henry van de Velde, 1901.

as to produce effects of light and a sense of fluid movement which give the same impression as late Rococo.

How was this impression of lightness reproduced on solid stone walls? In Brussels Horta made the transition from stonework to ironwork by paring down the stone where it meets the metal into two or three fine steps so that the stone seems to consist of thin layers. The iron is embedded in a hard inner layer of stone which is enfolded in the thin and softer outer layers as if in a piece of cloth. The effect of fine drapery enwrapping a clumsy load-bearing structure could be achieved more cheaply in plaster, and consequently the Art Nouveau period marked a high point in the use of stuccoed surfaces which gave a rich and light appearance through variety of texture.

The graphic explosion

The idea of using a beautiful surface both to protect and embellish an architectural structure had been put forward in the early nineteenth century by the German architect and writer Gottfried Semper, who pointed out that in early times the walls of dwellings had often been covered with fabric which, like the carpets in a nomad's tent, was both decorative and a means of insulation.

Around 1895 the Viennese School led by Otto Wagner took up this idea and began to experiment with it. Perhaps stimulated by developments in architecture, graphic artists were working along similar lines. Thus another facet of Art Nouveau design originated in Vienna: the construction of thin layers of surface materials in stone and glass. One way of suggesting that these were thin, non-load-bearing slabs was to leave exposed the screws with which they were fixed to the wall; another was to enclose them within a frame. Wagner and his school thus tried to achieve delicate effects through simple geometrical façades without having to transform stone surfaces into patterns of plants and drapery.

So much for the work of Art Nouveau artists as designers of façades, interiors and furniture. The less gifted architect or craftsman could pick up from art magazines their ideas and patterns for stucco decoration and, by adding a curved gable here or an omega-shaped window there, make it seem that he had designed a building in a new style even though its ground plan was traditional in conception. However, wealthy clients

Above left, arum lily vase in "Favrile" iridescent glass, by Tiffany Studios, Corona, New York, c. 1900-1910.
Left, front door handle, Brussels.
Below, detail of stair railing in Victor Horta's house (now the Horta Museum), Brussels, 1898.

and their architects sought to create surfaces which were nothing less than works of art. The most ambitious architects supervised every detail, inside and out, of the buildings they designed, from heating equipment to door handles. They created a fantastic illusory world of mirror walls and translucent stained glass. Today it is hard not to be amused by the extravagance of invention displayed in the design of such accessories of a luxurious life-style as a door handle transformed into the erotic figure of a woman wrapped in whirling drapery.

An international movement with national variants

Is it possible to subsume this great variety of decorative art into a single "style"? Although the forms differ, they are linked by a common intention to create an impression of lightness in load-bearing structures. But finding a generic name for this style is not easy. Unesco's project on this theme (see page 42) uses both the French term *Art Nouveau* and the German term *Jugendstil.* We should also speak of *Sezessionstil* in relation to Austria and *Modernismo* for Spain. Each of these terms refers to a specific situation.

"L'Art Nouveau" was the name of a shop opened in 1895 in Paris by Samuel Bing, a dealer in Japanese prints and East Asian *objets d'art* who also exhibited contemporary furniture and crafts. When he showed his collection in Dresden in 1897, it was billed simply as "Bing. Art Nouveau." Around 1900, by which time Bing had begun to turn to other styles, art critics adopted the name of his shop to describe the work of Guimard or Horta. Horta disliked being labelled as the exponent of a style. He considered himself to be a rationalist. Guimard wrote on his drawings "Style Guimard".

The German word *Jugendstil* is derived from the Munich weekly *Jugend* ("Youth"), which was launched in 1896. In 1900 Berlin critics wishing to disparage nonconformist paintings coined the word *Jugendstil* ("*Jugend* style"), but in 1902 another critic took up the word as an apt description of the fresh spirit of the new movement.

The German term *Sezession* ("secession") was used to denote separatist movements opposed to established and officially-supported groups of artists and conservative, nationalistic cultural policies. Secessionist exhibitions at Munich in 1892, at Vienna in 1897 and at Berlin in 1898 were

ostentatiously internationalist. But the term *Sezessionstil* ("Secession style") eventually came to be associated with the work and approach of artists working in Vienna.

All these terms were used both by conservative critics and by advocates of the new trend, which was known in Italy as *Stile Liberty* (after Liberty of London, a leading manufacturer of printed cotton fabric), and in Britain as "Modern Style". Many ironical names were also coined, including *Dolce Stile Nuove* in Italy, *Style Nouille* ("noodle style") in France, and *Paling Stijl* ("eel style") or *Coup de fouet* ("whiplash") style in Belgium.

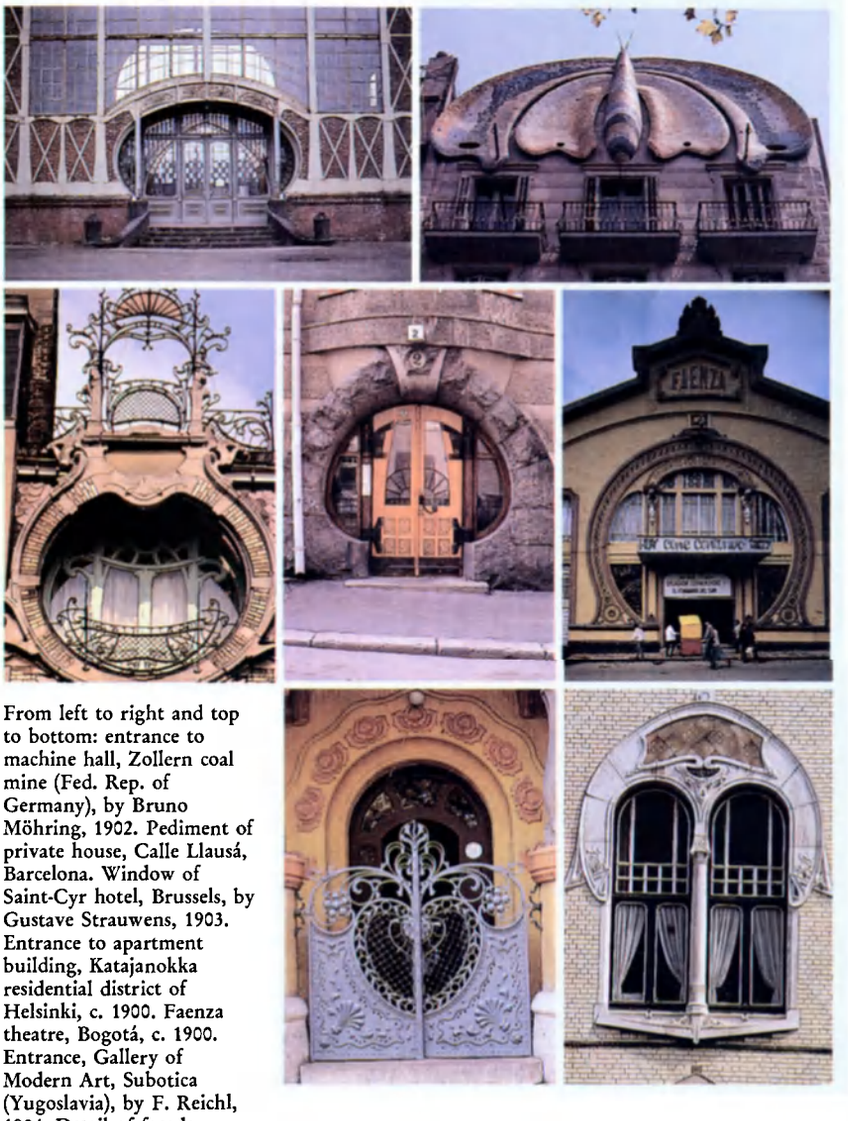
In many countries the new style became an emblem of a struggle for political independence and cultural identity, and artists often claimed to belong to the movement even when their work showed otherwise. In Finland and Hungary, for example, the more abstract motifs of Art Nouveau were enriched by borrowings from folklore and history. There seems to have been a common effort to discover and define through the movement a truly national art which could replace outmoded international and historicist styles. In many cases Art Nouveau proved unsatisfactory for this purpose and more monumental styles were evolved to satisfy national aspirations.

Architects and art magazines

The search for distinctive national styles seems inconsistent with the rapid international vogue for Art Nouveau. Few Art Nouveau architects worked exclusively in their country of origin. Although Horta in Brussels, Guimard in Paris, Saarinen in Helsinki and Wagner in Vienna all found commisions in their native cities, the Belgian architect van de Velde emigrated to Germany and worked at Hagen, Berlin and Weimar. His hopes of settling in Paris came to nothing. Joseph Maria Olbrich of Vienna, who founded the artists' colony at Darmstadt in 1889 on the invitation of the Grand Duke of Hesse, worked in Germany until his death in 1908. One of the finest *Jugendstil* buildings in Munich is by the Hungarian architect F. Nyilas, and the Italian architect Raimondo d'Aronco was employed by the Sultan in Istanbul when he designed the pavilions for the 1902 Turin Exhibition which made his name. Charles Rennie Mackintosh worked in Glasgow (Scotland), but also executed commissions for Viennese clients. The Viennese architect Hoffmann's best-known design is the Palais Stoclet in Brussels.

The new theories were also transmitted through Europe by schools of architecture. Otto Wagner's classes at the Vienna Art School attracted pupils from the countries of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and their neighbours, including Italy. Yugoslavians and Scandinavians studied at German universities and Scandinavian

Above, detail of façade, 185 rue Belliard, Paris, 1913. Right, 34 avenue de Wagram, Paris, by Jules Lavirotte, 1904. Sculpture by Laphilippe.



From left to right and top to bottom: entrance to machine hall, Zollern coal mine (Fed. Rep. of Germany), by Bruno Möhring, 1902. Pediment of private house, Calle Llausá, Barcelona. Window of Saint-Cyr hotel, Brussels, by Gustave Strauwens, 1903. Entrance to apartment building, Katajanokka residential district of Helsinki, c. 1900. Faenza theatre, Bogotá, c. 1900. Entrance, Gallery of Modern Art, Subotica (Yugoslavia), by F. Reichl, 1904. Detail of façade, Avenue Cogels-Osylei, Antwerp (Belgium), by Jos Bascourt, 1895.

students visited Britain. Finland and Hungary had artistic connections with many other countries.

It was largely due to these schools, and to magazines such as *The Studio* in England, *Dekorative Kunst* in Germany, and many others, that the new ideas spread so rapidly. Only two years after it had begun publication, *Jugend* was warning against the dangers of copying the new style. The designs which appeared in its pages became so popular that after 1900 they were protected by copyright.

Outside Europe the new ideas spread through colonial or post-colonial connections, such as those between Britain and the Commonwealth and between Spain and Latin America. European architects and their local colleagues enriched the new style with injections of local tradition. It is impossible to list all the exchanges, direct and indirect, national and international, which created the paradox of an international movement embracing a tangle of national and local Art Nouveau styles.

This complex and subtle style became so widespread that there are few cities where unknown local builders or plasterers have not enriched entrance halls, staircases or windows with Art Nouveau motifs, thus endowing entire urban districts with a distinctive appearance and atmosphere.

The triumph of asymmetry

Elaborate decorative effects and the subtle interplay of surface textures were not the only achievements of Art Nouveau. The freedom of asymmetry was rediscovered in planning floor-space, together with new ideas about movement and space in domestic architecture. A new architectural vocabulary was created at Otto Wagner's School in Vienna, expressed in the extensive use of horse-shoe- and omega-shaped arches over doors or windows, perhaps influenced by Islamic or Chinese architecture. Equally typical is the contrast between massive walls, pillars and other structural elements and the airy lightness of the roofs and skylights between them. The Wagner School also introduced the curtain wall, a concept adapted by Olbrich for his entrance gate to the Darmstadt Exhibition in 1901 in the form of a huge piece of cloth hung between two towers.

The shapes of buildings were also radically modified. Olbrich, for example, designed houses at Darmstadt with oblique or curved polygonal walls which foreshadowed the dynamic lines made possible by reinforced concrete in the 1920s and the automobile-age architecture of Erich Mendelsohn.

Art Nouveau, bold yet delicate, has something in common with the art of Debussy. Once again it has captured the imagination of a world tending towards uniformity, but its subtlety, like that of the plants which inspired it, renders it fragile and difficult to preserve. ■

MANFRED SPEIDEL is professor of the theory of architecture at the Technical University, Aachen (Fed. Rep. of Germany). The author of a history of traditional and modern Japanese architecture (1983), he has recently edited the complete works of the German architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938).

A fresh look

It is widely recognized that the Japanese aesthetic, and especially its penchant for disymmetry and decorative surfaces, was one of the principal sources of inspiration for Art Nouveau, which reached Japan in the early years of the twentieth century. What kind of reception did it have in this country to which it owed so much?

Art Nouveau was introduced to Japan by a handful of artists and architects returning from Europe. In 1900, the artist Asai Chu, who was studying in Paris with the decorator Fukuchi Fukuichi, was invited by Samuel Bing to visit his Art Nouveau pavilion at the Universal Exhibition. A champion of the avant-garde and a collector of Oriental art, Bing had visited Japan in 1875 and had become a promoter of Japanese art forms and culture in France.

Another friend of Asai was Natsume Kinnosuke, who under the pen-name of Natsume Soseki became one of Japan's leading modern novelists. He too visited the Paris Exhibition and then moved to London where he lived for three years. He was a great art-lover and a regular reader of the avant-garde English magazine *The Studio.*

On his return to Japan, Asai was appointed professor at the School of Decorative Arts that had recently been founded in Kyoto. Besides working as a painter, he was responsible for a number of creative innovations in the decorative arts, especially in the techniques of *maki-e* (painting in gold and silver on lacquer). The influence of Art Nouveau on his work, as well as on that of Fukuchi, is evident.

Natsume was equally receptive to Art Nouveau.

at traditional forms

BY HIROYASU FUJIOKA

In 1905 he published the first volume of his novel *Wagahai wa neko de aru* ("I Am a Cat"). The cover, by Hashiguchi Kiyoshi (also known as Goyô) was in Art Nouveau style. Art Nouveau influence was even stronger in the cover designs of the second volume (published in 1906) and of his other books, which were produced by the same artist, closely supervised by Natsume himself.

Outside this restricted circle, Art Nouveau had little effect on the decorative arts. Much greater was its influence on architecture, which reached Japan via architects who visited Europe or the United States or who had contacts with Europeans.

The new style from the West influenced the design of many shops, especially their façades. One noted example of this fashion, which continued until the mid-1910s, was the "Kamimoto Barber Shop", built at Osaka in 1903 but since demolished.

The best known of these architects was Takeda Goichi, who visited Glasgow during a trip to Europe between 1901 and 1903 and was greatly impressed by the works of the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. On his return to Japan, Takeda designed a house for Fukushima Yukinobu which was the most typical of the buildings inspired by Art Nouveau in Japan. In this house, completed in 1907 and now demolished, the influence of Art Nouveau was apparent throughout, from the front door to the motifs on the *fusuma*—the traditional movable partitions.

Few buildings incorporated the sinuous lines dear to Horta or Guimard. Takeda himself favoured the rectilinear style of Mackintosh and the architects of the Vienna Secession as being more in keeping with traditional Japanese architecture.

Generally speaking, Japanese artists, bound up as they were with the artistic style and craftsmanship of their own country, showed little enthusiasm for Art Nouveau. Even Takeda only worked sporadically in what he regarded as just one new style among others.

This lack of interest may perhaps be explained by the resounding success achieved by Japanese decorative arts at a number of great international exhibitions held in Europe and the United States. Seeing this as an opportunity to develop Japanese exports, the government strongly encouraged the traditional arts. The important thing for Japanese artists was to create a purely national art rather than a European art form seen through Japanese eyes.

The situation in architecture was different. The Meiji government, established in 1867, wanted to show the people of the West that Japanese civilization was a match for their own. Buildings comparable to those in Western cities should be constructed as a matter of prestige. And Art Nouveau did not seem to lend itself to the concept of "prestige architecture".

The overall impact of Art Nouveau in Japan was, however, far from negative. Art Nouveau demonstrated that it was possible to look at traditional forms through new eyes and gave Japanese architects an opportunity to concentrate once more on design, to emphasize the importance of surfaces and the aesthetics of disymmetry. It also helped them to achieve a new awareness of their own traditions. ■

From left to right: cover design by Hashiguchi Kiyoshi (Goyô) for the second volume of Natsume Soseki's novel *I Am a Cat*, 1906. Ink blotter in silver and horn by Ernest Cardeilhac, France, 1900. Netsuke (Japanese ornamental toggle) carved from boxwood in a mushroom design, late 18th century. *The Watch of the Angels*, appliqué on felt by Henry van de Velde, 1893. *Woman with an Umbrella*, print by Okajima Toyohiro (1773-1828).

HIROYASU FUJIOKA, of Japan, is associate professor in the architecture department of the Tokyo Institute of Technology. A specialist in modern architecture and town planning, he has published a number of articles on Japanese architecture, focused particularly on the conservation of his country's cultural heritage.

From Horus to Aïda

BY MONA ZAALOUK

THE FARAWAY SOURCES

EGYPT

SUSPENDED in time between the medieval and the modern, a handful of Cairo buildings inspired by Art Nouveau principles have survived in a city in the throes of a building boom as monuments to the complex cultural relationship between Egypt and Europe in the nineteenth century.

Art Nouveau was an eclectic movement and its adepts sought new ideas and sources of inspiration outside Europe. In this they continued a trend that may be said to have started in the eighteenth century when the Baroque movement had shown an interest in Oriental motifs. In the nineteenth, an age of rapid political, technological and economic upheaval, new developments in popular journalism, the increasing use of photography and the telegraph and many other improvements in communication and transport hastened the propagation of ideas, forms and discoveries from country to country. A flow of travel books, guidebooks and magazines were produced, stimulating European interest in distant lands and peoples. Late in the century Art Nouveau was a mirror of this new receptivity and among the many influences that shaped it those of ancient Egyptian art and thought played a part, albeit subtle and indirect.

A key episode in the transmission of Egyptian cultural influence to Europe was Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1799. Over 120 scholars accompanied the expedition with instructions to study and catalogue Egyptian monuments. The results of their work, published in illustrated folio editions after 1809, laid the foundations for a European vogue for styles in architecture, arts and crafts inspired by ancient Egypt.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, echoes of ancient Egyptian art and mythology can be found in the work of European artists and thinkers seeking to re-establish spiritual values in a materialistic society. The fantastic dream world of Symbolism, one of the many currents that flowed into the stream of Art Nouveau, is in several ways reminiscent of Egyptian mural painting—in its interest in themes of death and the afterlife, in its fondness for the feminine.

A more direct Egyptian influence on Art Nouveau can be seen in many of the decorative objects and jewellery created in the 1900s by artists such as Gaillard, Gautrait, the Pier brothers and Georges Fouquet. Working with precious metals and stones, coloured glass and enamels, they used motifs from ancient Egyptian art such as the lotus flower, the scarab, the snake and the winged god Horus. In ancient Egypt too, art had permeated everyday life, an ambition shared by Art Nouveau artists.

Top, falcon bowl in faïence, by Emile Gallé, 1885-1889. Above, brooch with hornet and lotus motifs, by Georges Fouquet, 1901.
Below left, entrance to a Brussels apartment building, 1900.
Opposite page, cigar box with scarab motif, in wood and "Favrile" iridescent glass, by Tiffany Studios, Corona, New York, c. 1900.

While Europe was discovering Egypt, Egypt began to turn its eyes to Europe. As part of his drive to modernize the country, the visionary Egyptian leader Mohammed Ali (1769-1849) created scholarships and encouraged scholars, thinkers and researchers to go to France to study. By the second half of the nineteenth century many upper class Egyptians were looking to Europe as a source of fashion. The Cairo Opera House, built by Khedive Ismail for the first performance of Verdi's Egyptian-inspired opera *Aïda*, staged to mark the opening of the Suez Canal, is a smaller replica of La Scala in Milan. Both in Europe and in Egypt it had become current to look to other cultures for inspiration.

When, around the beginning of this century, many European artists, craftsmen, architects and intellectuals emigrated to Egypt, they thus found no lack of patrons among well-to-do Egyptians who were eager to adopt European habits and models. One result of this encounter was that a new style of architecture inspired by Art Nouveau began to appear in Cairo and Alexandria, replacing the traditional style practised since the Fatimid era. Elaborate sculptural ornamentation was introduced into private homes and public buildings. Human figures or columns, or intertwined plants, replaced the more sober traditional architecture which also, however, had featured ornamented ceilings and was initially a source of inspiration for Art Nouveau.

Notable buildings of this period include the Cecil Hotel in Alexandria and Cairo's Cosmopolitan Hotel and Groppi tea-rooms, the latter built by a Swiss emigrant. Patient exploration would reveal other more anonymous examples of the period dwarfed beneath the tower blocks of modern Cairo. ■

MONA ZAALOUK, an Egyptian artist, has published many articles in *Cairo Today*, a magazine on art and literature.

The house as a total work of art

BY CÉCILE DULIÈRE

Top, cover of the English magazine *The Studio*. Above, vignette by Henry van de Velde, 1905. Opposite page, main staircase of the Hôtel Solvay, Brussels, by Victor Horta, 1894-1898. Oil painting by Théo van Rysselberghe, 1902.

THE birth of Art Nouveau can be dated to 1893, the year when the first issue of *The Studio*, a magazine devoted to the propagation of ideas about art in interior decoration, was published in London. It was also the year in which the Belgian architect Victor Horta built the Hôtel Tassel—the first private residence to be constructed in a radically new technical and plastic style and to be conceived as a "total work of art".

"Art Nouveau", a term which symbolized a feeling that a new age was breaking away from the past, was an artistic phenomenon closely linked to the Industrial Revolution. In the nineteenth century new forms of energy (electricity), new mass-produced materials (iron and glass) and new inventions (the railway, telegraphy, the telephone, photography) transformed both landscapes and ways of living.

Confidence in human progress and faith in the future were reflected in a series of great international exhibitions. The first of these was held in 1851 in London, the capital of the world's then most powerful and most highly industrialized country, in a vast construction of iron and glass, the Crystal Palace. The 1851 Exhibition attracted over six million visitors and was a huge popular success. English artists were, however, revolted by the ugliness of mass-produced articles for everyday use. They mobilized in protest.

Arts and Crafts

The English artist William Morris (1834-1896) launched a crusade against the "virus of ugliness". He maintained that rather than enclosing themselves in an ivory tower and serving only the privileged few, artists should work for the greatest number and play a part in the creation of everyday objects. The distinction between artist and artisan should be abolished, together with the traditional differentiation between the "major" arts (painting, sculpture, architecture) and "minor" arts such as cabinet-making, ceramics, and tapestry. Despite its rejection of the machine, Morris's Arts and Crafts Movement was important for making the first attempt to apply artistic principles to the fabrication of everyday objects—what later came to be known as design.

True to his principle of "decorative honesty", Morris did not conceal the natural colour of the bricks of the "Red House", the home he had built at Upton in Kent, beneath the usual covering of stucco, and he commissioned his painter, architect and sculptor friends to decorate and furnish its interior. In 1861, he established his own firm, Morris and Company, in London, to market the new artistic style of furnishing and interior decoration which had become his major preoccupation. Several English painters, sculptors and architects followed his example and became "artist designers".

Walter Crane (1845-1915), the "philosopher of the nursery" as he was jokingly called, took Morris's ideas even further. He set out to instil a sense of beauty in children at the earliest possible age and the success of his children's books did much to publicize the ideas of the Arts and Crafts Movement elsewhere in Europe. The propagation of these ideas owed more, however, to a number of specialized magazines, the most famous of which was *The Studio. An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*. Resolutely modern in tone and with "Use and Beauty" as its motto, it carried interviews with artists and reviews of exhibitions organized prize competitions and was lavishly illustrated, mainly with photographs.

Morris brought a new style of floral decoration to his wallpapers and printed cotton and velvet fabrics. Abandoning the stylized flowers of the past, he established a much closer link with Nature, selecting for his designs humble meadow or garden plants such as pimpernels, daffodils, violets and daisies or, more often, such climbing plants as blackthorn and honeysuckle. His experiments with the decorative effect of sinuous plant stems and silhouettes against a monochrome background were continued by others including Charles Annesley Voysey (1857-1941) and Arthur Mackmurdo (1851-1942), who, in the early 1880s, designed a number of flame-like abstract floral motifs.

The sinuous lines of this floral decoration, the dynamic play of interlaced curves, became the hallmark of Art Nouveau whose influence was transmitted through fabrics designed for soft furnishings and through the illustration and design of books and magazines. The terms *Modern Style* used in France, and *Stile Liberty* and *Stile Inglese*, used in Italy, reflect the great debt Europe owed to English proto-Art Nouveau.

It was in Belgium, however, that these new ideas from England really blossomed and were given an architectural dimension they had previously lacked. It was from there that Art Nouveau spread through Europe. In the 1880s Brussels was a leading centre of avant-garde art. Formed in 1883, the Brussels group known as "Les XX" (the Twenty)—which ten years later became "La Libre Esthétique"—invited the most original and controversial foreign artists to its annual exhibition (it was there that Van Gogh made his only sale). From 1891, the exhibition was opened to the applied arts and included items such as illustrated books by Walter Crane, tapestries, ceramics and even complete room furnishings, such as the "craftsman's room", exhibited in 1895, created by the architect and decorator Gustave Serrurier-Bovy (1858-1910), who was the first to import into Belgium textiles and objects made in England.

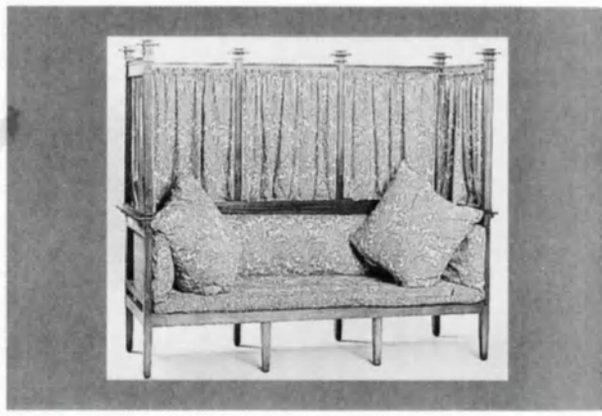
William Morris's social and artistic ideas were most fully adopted by the Belgian painter Henry van de Velde (1863-1957), who gave up painting in 1893 and devoted himself to the decorative arts with the avowed intention of "destroying the virus of ugliness". When he married, he decided to create single-handed the entire décor of his new home—the Villa Bloemenwerf in Uccle near Brussels (1895). Going even further than William Morris, he drew the plans for the house, designed the furniture, the wallpaper, the cutlery and even the clothes his young wife would wear. He seemed to be a universal man, the "complete artist". As a writer, he propagated his theory of "ornamentation as a living necessity" engendered by the dynamics of line, which "reflects primarily the movement induced by the inner life"

In 1898, he established in Brussels his "arts of industry, construction and ornamentation workshops". His work was well received abroad, particularly in Germany where he settled in 1901 and where his ideas about the decorative arts were widely propagated.

A revolutionary architect

Art Nouveau was given full all-round expression for the first time by the architect Victor Horta (1861-1947) in the house he designed in 1893 for Emile Tassel, a professor at the University of Brussels. Conceived as a "total work of art", from the foundations to the minutest detail of its interior decoration, the Hôtel Tassel represented a radical break with the architectural and decorative language of the past.

Horta revolutionized domestic architecture by making full use of the qualities of iron as a building material—it had hitherto been reserved for constructions built by engineers, such as exhibition halls, railway stations, warehouses, green-



Below right and below, the Villa Bloemenwerf, near Brussels, by Henry van de Velde, 1895. He also designed the lady's gown.

Left, settee upholstered in "Tulip" chintz, by Arthur Mackmurdo, 1886.
Right, heating appliance, Hôtel Solvay, Brussels, by Victor Horta.

houses and the like. In 1889, as a young man, Horta had seen the famous iron tower erected by the French engineer Gustave Eiffel, but to use this industrial material, thought of as vulgar, in the construction of a house in a conformist bourgeois setting was a huge challenge.

Far from concealing this bold initiative, Horta gave prominence to bolts and rivets and in so doing developed an entirely new architectural and decorative language. He radically altered the disposition of the interior, which he opened up by using delicately fashioned metal load-bearing structures in place of partition walls. His combined iron and glass partitioning enabled light to penetrate to every corner and made the stair well the glowing centre-piece of the residence. This was an architectural plan of outstanding originality.

The architect draws a plan and the façade of a building is merely the reflection of this plan. The layout of the interior, dictated by the tastes and life style of the future occupants, is pre-eminent. As Horta wrote concerning the Hôtel Winssingers (1894), a house is the "portrait" of those who are going to live in it. In this case, the layout of the main floor, its variation in levels and the choice of furniture were all explained by the fact that the wife of the man who had commissioned the house could only move around with difficulty.

In this kind of highly personalized architecture, everything is the architect's business. For the Hôtel Tassel Horta designed the complete interior—the panelling, the windows, the mosaics, the wall paintings, the carpets, the ironwork and even the door handles. He also ensured the perfect harmonization of the lighting and heating equipment.

The architecture and decoration cannot be separated. The line of the load-bearing structures is prolonged and softened by the decoration, which seems to originate from the supporting pillars and to extend to the ceilings, the walls, the floor, accentuating the continuity of the interior space. Serpentine curves and counter-curves terminate in a whiplash. In them can be seen the vital thrust of a growing plant, but a plant with neither flower nor leaf. "What I like in a plant," said Horta, "is its stem." Making use of the widest possible variety of materials, Horta exploited the contrasts of texture and colour—the cold smoothness of marble, the ribbing of dull riveted metal,

CÉCILE DULIÈRE, Belgian archaeologist and an official at her country's cultural heritage ministry, teaches at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Brussels. She was curator of the Horta Museum from 1975-1980 and has edited the memoirs of Victor Horta, published in 1985.

the softness of light-coloured wood fashioned like sculpture.

The success of the Hôtel Tassel earned Horta commissions for two more prestigious houses, one for the industrial magnate Armand Solvay, the other for Edmond van Eetvelde. In both cases provision had to be made for vast reception areas, but, faithful to his principles, Horta adapted the plans for the two buildings to match the personalities of his clients. For the Hôtel Solvay he designed a quadrangular double staircase as the setting for a magnificent pointilliste painting; for the Hôtel van Eetvelde, an octagonal area with an oblique staircase of the utmost refinement.

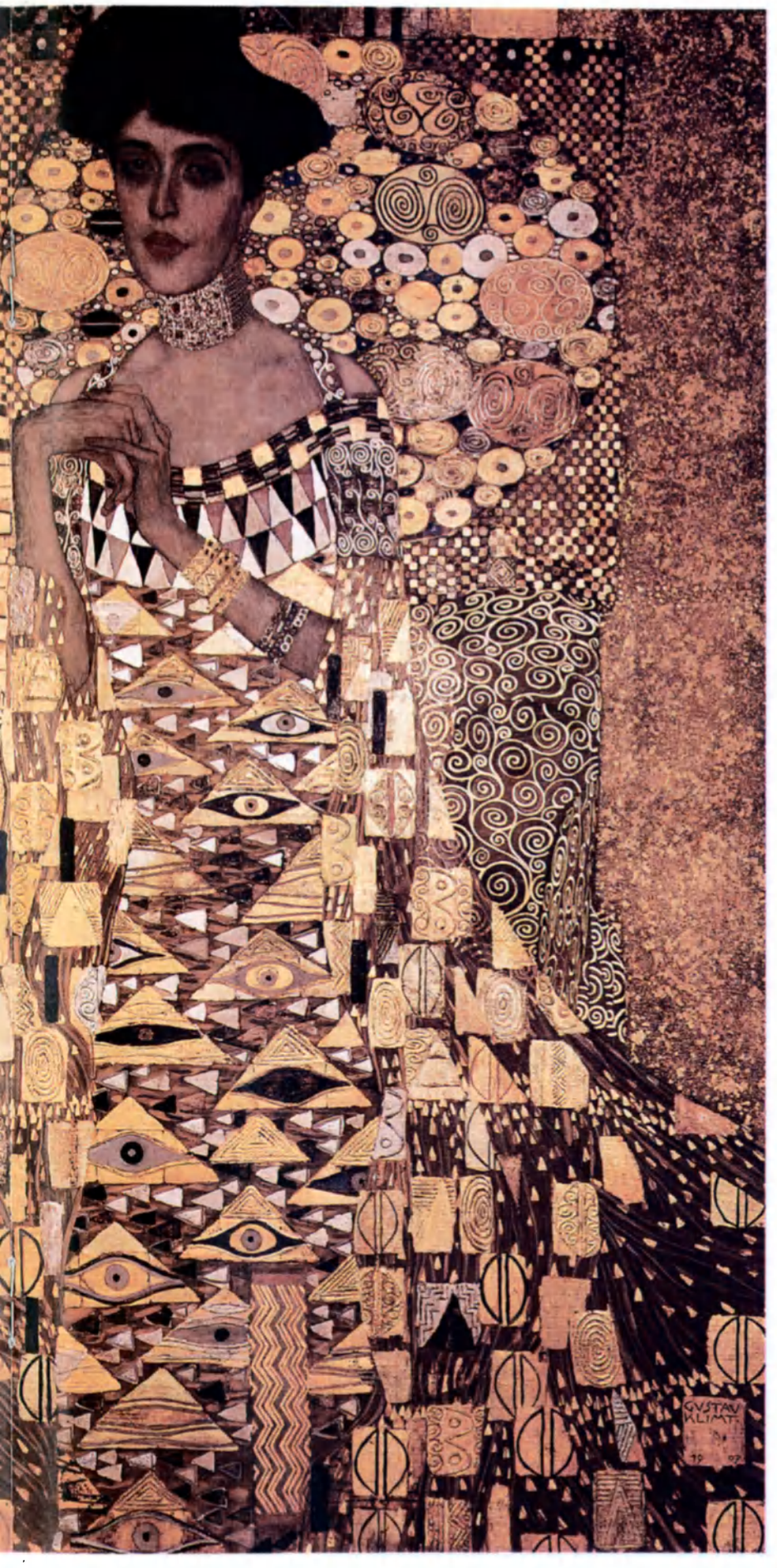
Horta not only designed everything, he also personally supervised the execution of every detail of the work which he entrusted to the finest craftsmen. The cost in work, time and money was considerable.

The rich clients who commissioned Horta to build these fine residences belonged to the class of businessmen and industrialists that had emerged from the Industrial Revolution. In this new architecture, which was freed from the burden of mixed styles and made extensive use of new techniques and materials, they saw the expression of their time— *"à temps nouveaux, art nouveau"* ("a new art for new times").

In 1896, Horta was asked to build the new Maison du Peuple in Brussels. Behind its curvilinear façade of glass and iron, it housed cooperative shops, a café and offices. On the first floor was a vast room for meetings of Belgium's young Socialist Party, fêtes and conferences. The site, in the centre of the city, was expensive and some of the funds for it were donated to the Socialist Party by Armand Solvay, man of progress, founder of scientific institutions and one of Horta's clients.

The inauguration, in 1899, of this "house whose luxury was in the air and light so long excluded from the workers' hovels", was the occasion of enthusiastic celebrations that marked the high point of the period of grace during which the progressive bourgeoisie and the Belgian Socialist Party combined their efforts in a common faith in the universality of progress and culture.

Dissension began to appear at the beginning of the new century. Art Nouveau became fashionable and many brilliant architects busily emulated Horta. In new districts of Brussels Art Nouveau façades mushroomed—more than 500 of outstanding interest have been counted, earning the city the title of "the capital of Art Nouveau". But these are mainly personalized façades of buildings whose layouts are extremely banal. The house as "a total work of art", as conceived and built by Victor Horta, was, alas, beyond the means of most people. ■



Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, by Gustav Klimt, 1907.

From fantasy to functionalism

BY ANDREAS LEHNE

In 1895, a German specialist in Oriental art named Samuel Bing (1838-1905) opened a gallery in Paris which he called "L'Art Nouveau". Among the modern artists whose works he showed were Henry van de Velde, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Félix Vallotton and Constantin Meunier.

These works were praised in the German press, and some of them were shown in Dresden in 1897 at an international art exhibition at which van de Velde's interior designs caused a sensation. Van de Velde, who was soon inundated with commissions, became the driving force behind *Jugendstil,* the German version of Art Nouveau.

Jugendstil in Munich

However, it was Munich, not Dresden, which became the main centre from which the influence of *Jugendstil* would spread in Germany. A relatively small city, Munich had become the leading artistic centre of nineteenth-century Germany thanks to the ambitious policies of the Wittelsbachs, the Bavarian ruling house. In 1893, the

Entrance to the Vienna Secession House, by Joseph Maria Olbrich, 1898-1899.

Munich public discovered the works of the Dutch Symbolist painter and illustrator Jan Toorop (1858-1928), who displayed his mastery of the new style in the sinuous locks of the Javanese girls who feature in many of his paintings.

Hermann Obrist (1863-1927) was one prominent member of the new movement. In 1894, this great traveller, familiar with all the trends of avant-garde art, transferred to Munich the embroidery workshop he had set up in Florence. His embroidered wall hanging entitled *Peitschenhieb* (1895; "Whiplash") is one of the finest examples of German "floralism". This "brilliant interlacing of stitches flowing over ornamental forms like the cells of a living organism" has some affinities with the celebrated stucco relief (now destroyed) which embellished the façade of the Berlin architect August Endell's Elvira photography studio (1897-1898), a fantastic piece of decoration which was also endowed with organic life. Both these artists sought to vie with Nature.

The Munich painter Richard Riemerschmid (1868-1957) revolutionized interior design through his blend of *Jugendstil* and local tradition. In 1900 his "Room for an Art Lover" was shown at the Paris Exhibition. He designed a theatre whose fluent, elegant lines expressed a balanced, mature style which had not yet become purely geometrical. Riemerschmid was one of the co-founders of the *Vereinigte Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk* ("Workshops for Arts and Crafts") which set out to raise the aesthetic standard of everyday objects but, unlike the British Arts and Crafts Movement, fully exploited the technical possibilities of mass production.

The reputation of Munich was based essentially on its art journals such as *Pan* and the popular magazine *Jugend* from which the German Art Nouveau movement took its name.

Otto Eckmann (1865-1902) gave illustration and typography a completely new look. In his work plant forms meld into zoomorphic or abstract motifs, in an endless metamorphosis. Water changes into plants and plants into swans or snakes which then acquire human attributes. Typographical characters are intertwined like creepers, then transmogrified into flames and billowing columns of smoke.

Freshness, humour and satire are the hallmarks of these journals, partly illustrated in colour, which propagated the ideas of *Jugendstil* with great speed. In the pages of *Pan* and *Simplizissimus* artists such as Gulbransson, Arnold, Thöny and Paul published vitriolic caricatures; a stylized dachshund playfully drawn by Theodor Heine is transformed into a decorative motif full of irony.

Jugendstil in Berlin

By the turn of the century, Berlin had become a great modern city with a vigorous cultural life which placed it in the forefront of modern trends. In 1898, the artistic avant-garde finally turned its back on the outmoded cultural policy of the imperial court. Major architectural projects showed the influence of passing trends. Van de Velde designed spectacular shop interiors. With modest resources at his disposal, August Endell redecorated the auditorium of the Buntes Theater, creating a world of bizarre, fantastic, organic forms in a similar style to that of his Elvira studio. The same harmony of colours was used throughout, even in the uniforms of the attendants. The department stores designed by Bernhard Sehring and Alfred Messel still bore the influence of historicism, but some features such as the visible structure of the display windows and the glass surfaces into which the façade dissolves, prefigure modern architecture.

Above all, Berlin offers monumental, eclectic variants of *Jugendstil*, one notable example being the law-court in the Littenstrasse (1896-1905), with its startling contrast between the building's colossal dimensions and its graceful staircases.

Unlike Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (although Hungary had enjoyed a large measure of autonomy since 1867) was a multinational state subject to the centralized power of Vienna.

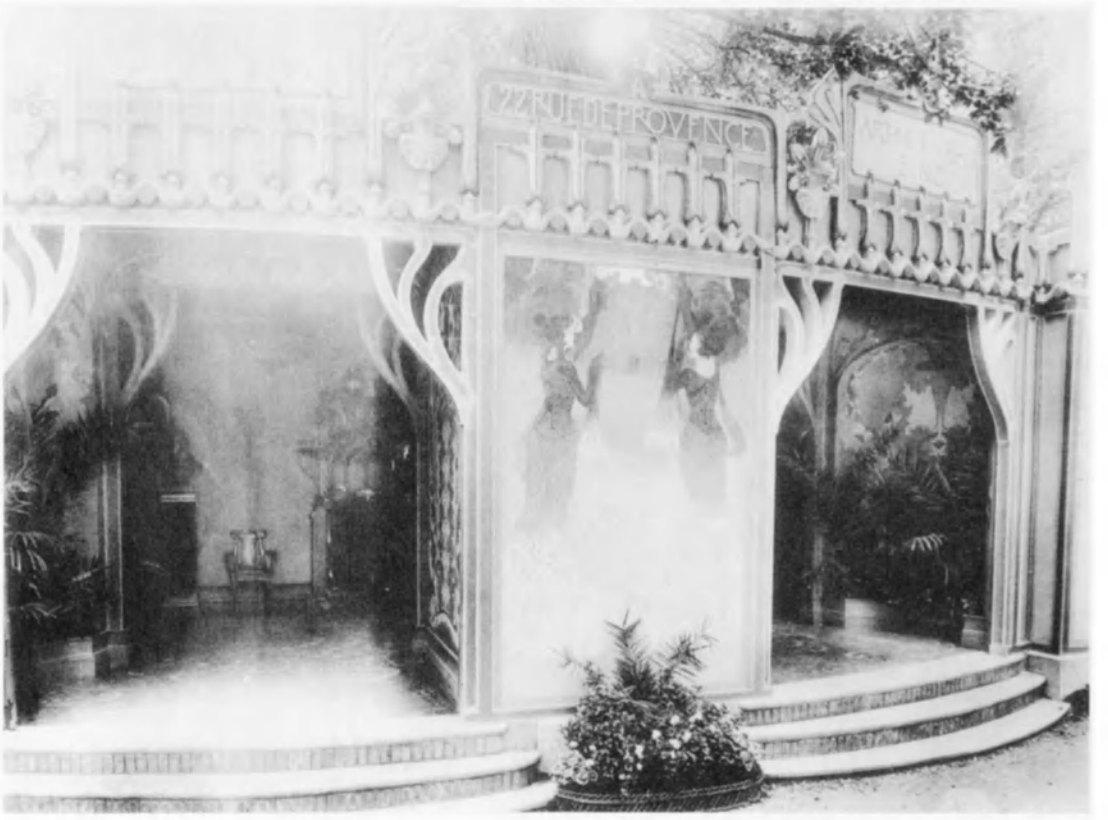
ANDREAS LEHNE, Austrian art historian, works with the Austrian National Office of Historical Monuments. He has published several works on 19th- and 20th-century art.

The Vienna Secession

In Vienna Art Nouveau found a champion in Otto Wagner (1841-1918), who was professor of architecture at the Vienna Academy and a passionate advocate of the need for an architectural style detached from historical pastiche and responsive to the demands of the modern age. "Only the functional can be beautiful," he told his students.

In the stations of the Vienna metropolitan railway, which he was commissioned to design in 1894, Wagner initially exploited all the graphic resources of floralism, but soon moved towards a more economical, functional style. He faced his "Majolica House" with a cladding of ceramic tiles to provide easy maintenance and a solid appearance, deliberately limiting embellishment to surface decoration. The influence of Art Nouveau was totally absent from his Cubist-style apartment blocks on the Linke Wienzeile.

The Austrian version of Art Nouveau was created in 1897 by a group of avant-garde artists who founded the movement known as the *Wiener Sezession*—the Vienna Secession. "This freshly kindled flame needs an appropriate setting to display it, a home of its own", wrote one contemporary art critic. Such a building, the *Haus der*



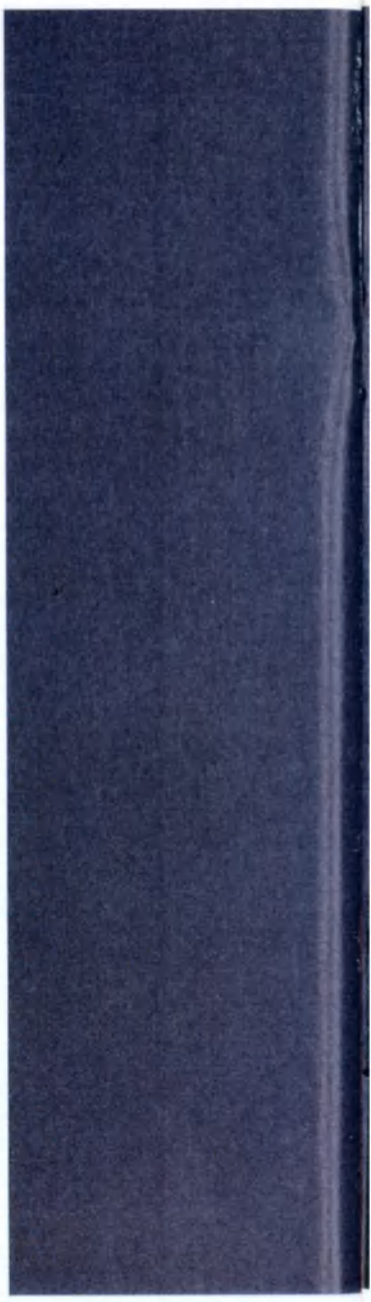
Left, Samuel Bing's Art Nouveau pavilion at the Universal Exhibition, Paris, 1900.
Below, auditorium of the Buntes Theater, Berlin, by August Endell, 1901.

Wiener Sezession (the Secession House, 1898-1899), was designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich (1867-1908), the most gifted of Wagner's pupils. It resembles a classical temple, but is surmounted by a dome of golden leaves, symbolizing Art Nouveau's break with traditional conventions.

In 1898, the Secession launched an ambitious review, *Ver Sacrum*, and organized in the Secession House successful exhibitions encompassing all the arts. For one exhibition devoted to Beethoven in 1902, Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), the undisputed leader of the Secessionists, painted frescoes inspired by the Ninth Symphony, which was conducted for the occasion by Gustav Mahler.

At the same exhibition, Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956), another Secessionist and former pupil of Otto Wagner, showed an abstract, Cubist sculpture which, despite passing virtually unnoticed at the time, heralded an important turning-point in the history of Viennese Art Nouveau. The age of ornamentation was coming to an end. Following the example of Hoffmann (and also displaying a strong Scottish influence), geometrical forms suddenly took over. From now on, ornamentation was only sparingly used and priority was given to exploiting the beauty of natural materials.

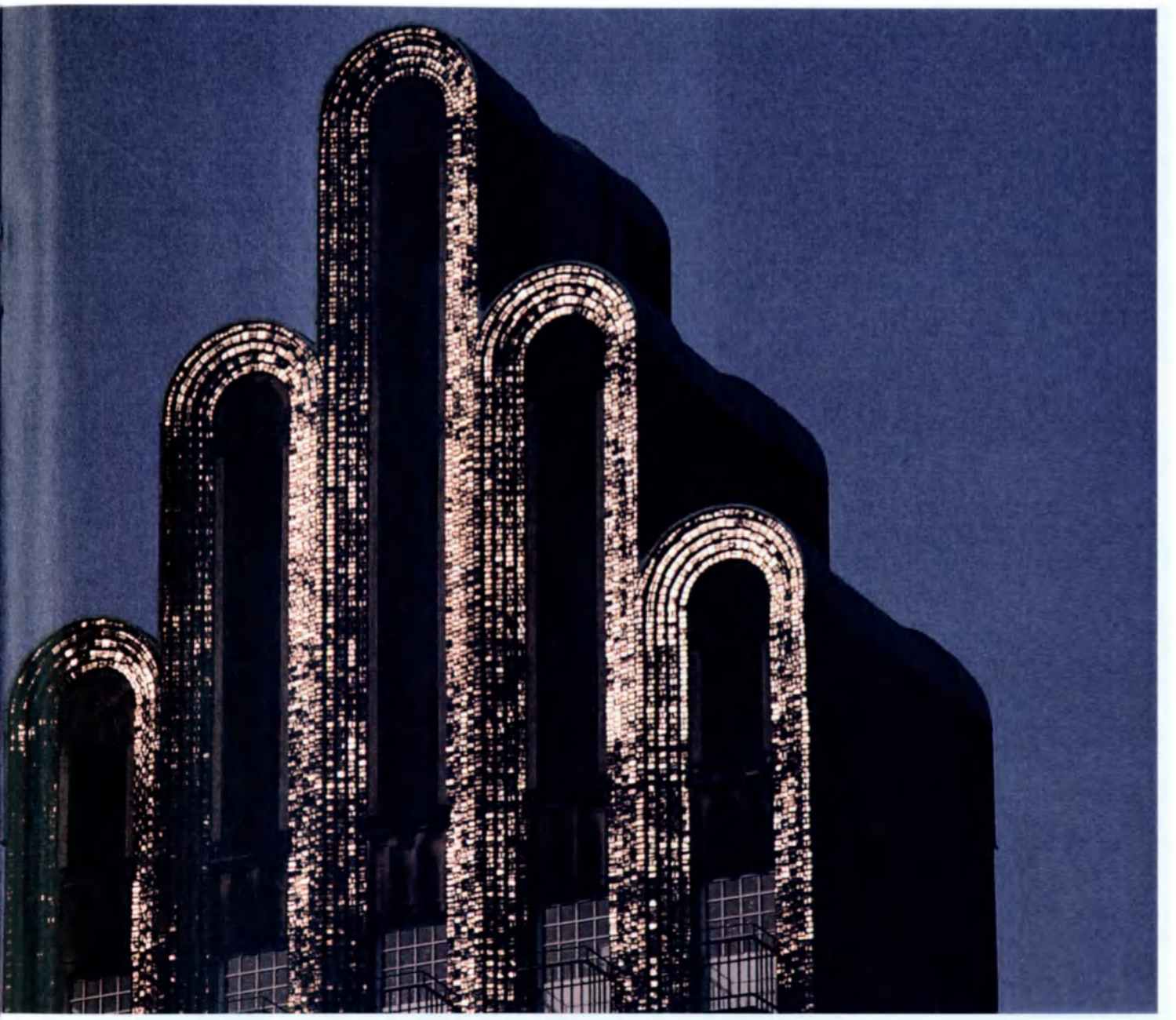
Hoffmann showed the full measure of his talent in the residence he built in Brussels between 1905 and 1911 for the Belgian financier Adolphe Stoclet. A total work of art, in the spirit of Horta, the Palais Stoclet, despite a certain luxuriance, marks the triumph of pure, unembellished forms displayed to full advantage by quality materials and fine craftsmanship.



Left, façade of the *Majolikahaus* ("Majolica House"), Vienna, by Otto Wagner, 1898. Right, detail of the *Hochzeitsturm* ("Wedding Tower") at Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, by Joseph Maria Olbrich, 1905-1908.

In a series of brilliant articles Adolf Loos (1870-1933) attacked *Jugendstil* as contrary to the very principles of modern (by which he meant something like "hygienic") civilization. Hostile to ornamentation, he was the pioneer of an international urban style.

In other parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire the use of folk imagery was seen as a means of creating a genuinely national architecture. The Hungarian version of *Jugendstil* contains many references to folklore. The tension between Viennese cosmopolitanism and national roots was felt by many of Otto Wagner's pupils during the inter-war period. It was most fruitfully expressed in the work of the Slovak architect Josef Plecnik, known as the "Slav Gaudí", who successfully reconciled the demands of functionalism, formal invention and inspiration from folklore.



Darmstadt: the rigours of form

A notable champion of new ideas in the arts, Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse-Darmstadt (1868-1937) commissioned two British architects, M. H. Baillie-Scott and C.R. Ashbee, to work on the private apartments of his palace. Wishing to encourage his country's arts and crafts, he invited a number of leading modern artists to settle in Darmstadt and work there in complete freedom, their material needs taken care of. The colony of artists which came into being in 1899 on Mathildenhöhe hill near Darmstadt was thus meant to express one of the major aspirations of *Jugendstil*, the synthesis of art and life. One member of the colony, the young Viennese architect Olbrich, designed a "House of Work", a "Temple" to the cult of artistic activity, as well as the houses of all the artists except for Peter Behrens (1868-1940) of Hamburg who built his own. The almost crystalline limpidity and rectilinear design of Behrens' house contrasted with Olbrich's decorative approach and aroused considerable interest. This building marked the second, "purified", phase of *Jugendstil*. In Vienna, but also more generally, *Jugendstil* now seemed to be simply a fashion, whose commercial and industrial exploitation aroused criticism.

Behrens was a key figure in these developments. The former painter and illustrator of *Pan* not only sealed the fate of floralism in Germany, but soon became the pioneer of architectural functionalism. The turbine factory which he designed for the electrical firm A.E.G. heralded the era of industrial architecture. A number of architects who worked in his studio, such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, later won an international reputation.

■

Northern lights

BY MARIA NASHTSHOKINA AND BORIS KIRIKOV

ART Nouveau in Russian architecture was accompanied by a profound interest in old traditions. At the turn of the century, the enchantments of Nordic art, with its powerful streak of archaism, were rediscovered, and Russian artists dreamed of combining modern art techniques with images from the folklore and wild natural beauty of the north.

They were captivated not only by the medieval and vernacular architecture of northern Russia, but also by the culture of Finland and the Scandinavian countries. For as well as being neighbours, or, in the case of the Principality of Finland, linked to the Russian empire, these countries were seen as being spiritually united. This was the beginning of what Sergei Diaghilev called a "Nordic Renaissance", in which curiosity about the past and the Nordic identity rooted in it combined with a strong desire to explore all the possibilities of new forms of expression.

There were two major trends. The first was the neo-Russian style, which drew inspiration from the architecture of Novgorod, Pskov and northern Russia, and flourished in Moscow. The second, with which this article is concerned, was modern Nordic art, a branch of Art Nouveau that flourished mainly in the then capital of Russia, St. Petersburg (today Leningrad). Its rise was closely linked to Finnish and, to a lesser extent, Swedish "national Romanticism".

The affinities between the Finnish and the St. Petersburg schools of architecture, nurtured by geographical proximity, were further accentuated by the presence in St. Petersburg of practising Finnish architects and by joint participation in national and international exhibitions. The versatile painter Akseli W. Gallén-Kallela (1865-1931), well-known for his paintings inspired by the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala,* was one of the fathers of Finnish national Romanticism. He took part in the Russian national exhibition held at Nizhni-Novgorod in 1896 and in others held in St. Petersburg, and produced many architectural projects for St. Petersburg, Moscow and Revel (now Tallinn).

Russian and Finnish architects harmoniously combined technical innovation and extreme stylization of Scandinavian, Russian and Karelo-Finnish art motifs—solar symbols, animal and plant images—and skilfully combined natural materials such as wood and stone.

The favoured setting for this style, St. Petersburg, was a city with two faces. On the one hand it was a bourgeois, mercantile, European city looking out over the Baltic, a monumental, rapidly-growing Rome of the north. On the other it was the result of an extraordinary encounter between the force of its natural setting and the force of the human will, an ephemeral Babylon in danger of being swallowed up by the marshlands on which it had been built.

Nostalgia for the beauty of the natural world found full expression in modern Nordic art. In the architecture of many St. Petersburg buildings this love of Nature, so extreme that Diaghilev described it as "pagan adoration", burst forth on façades teeming with stylized animals, birds, fish, trees and flowers. Under Finnish prompting, the expressive potential of rough, grainy surfaces such as that of granite, and the evocative power of combinations of natural and man-made materials, were revealed. The rough masonry of the walls recalled old Celtic legends of "evil stones". Beneath the surface of daily life were strong romantic undercurrents.

At that time there were Swedish and Finnish colonies in St. Petersburg. Born in St. Petersburg, but of Swedish nationality, the brilliant architect F. Lidval was the father of Nordic Modernism in the city. His first major work (1899-1904), a forerunner of the masterpieces he later created in Sweden, was an apartment house at 1-3 Kamenoostrovsky Avenue (now Kirovskiy Avenue) which displays all the characteristics of the new style—free interplay of volumes, diversity of window-design, subtle harmonization of materials, and, from the mysterious world of the forest, ornamentation whose profusion in no way detracts from the building's rational functionalism.

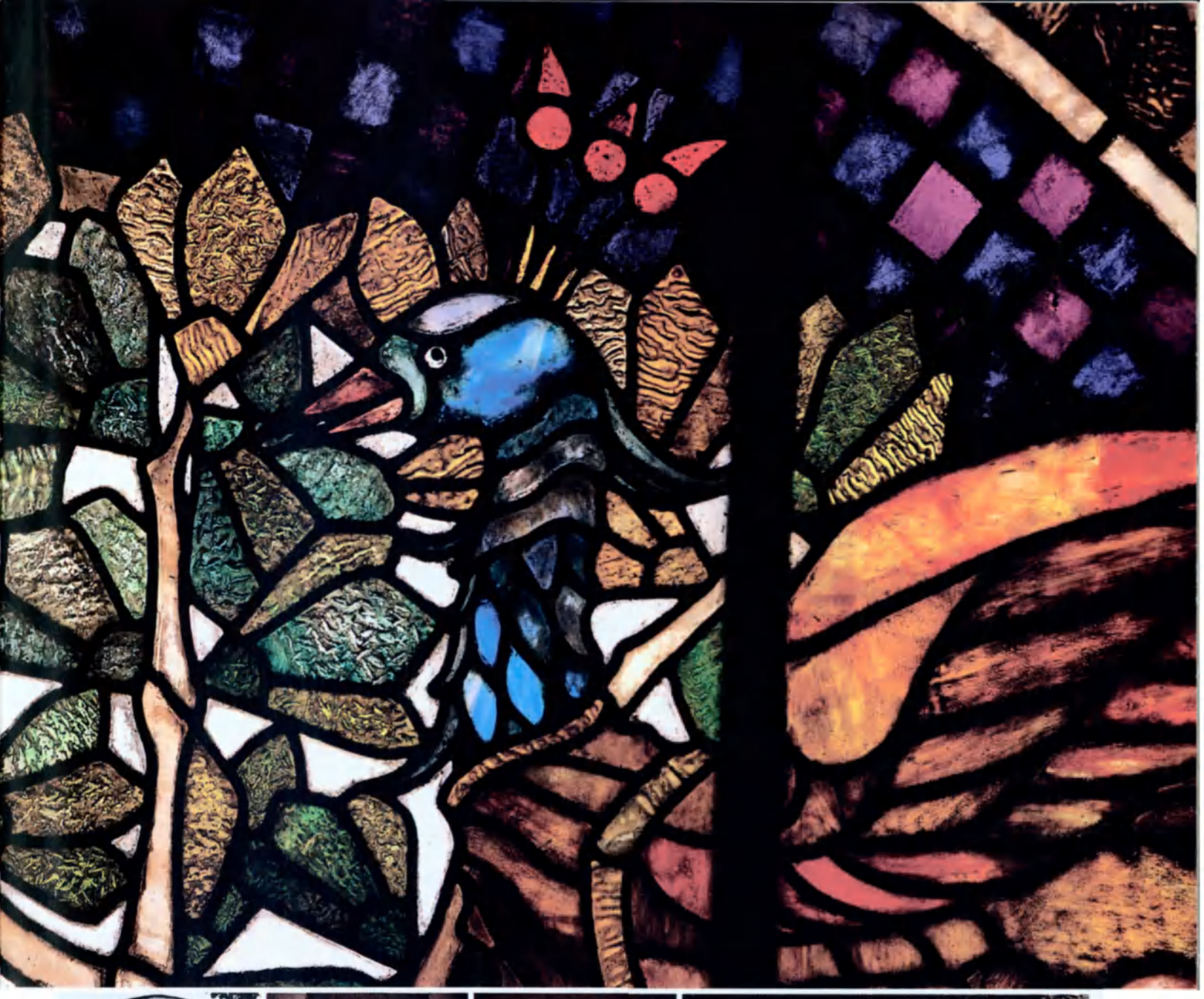
Perhaps the finest jewel in the crown of St. Petersburg Nordic architecture is an apartment building at 11 Stremiannaïa Street (1906-1907) by N. Vasiliev and A. Bubir. The highly stylized symbolism of the ornamentation blends with the architectural structure to form an organic whole. The elegant simplification of form to which Nordic Modernism aspired here achieves perfection.

It was in such buildings that the Nordic Renaissance subtly reaffirmed the Baltic character of St. Petersburg, while leaving its European aspects untouched. ■

Staircase window (detail), apartment building in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), by A. Gimpel and V. Iliashev, 1905-1907.

MARIA NASHTSHOKINA, of the USSR, is a researcher with the National Institute of the Theory of Architecture and Town Planning, Moscow.

BORIS KIRIKOV, of the USSR, is a researcher with the Institute of the Theory of Architecture and Town Planning, Leningrad.



From top to bottom and left to right:
gable of apartment building, St. Petersburg, by F. Lidval, 1899-1904 (a).
Front door, Eira residential district, Helsinki (b).
Entrance to Gorky Museum, Moscow, 1902 (c).
Detail of entrance porch, St. Petersburg, by E. Morosov, 1911-1912 (d).
Front door, Katajanokka-Katudden district, Helsinki (e).
Entrance, Eira district, Helsinki (f).
Colonnaded entrance, Katajanokka district, Helsinki (g).
Sculpted ornament, house in Eira district, Helsinki (h).

Clockwise from right: façade of the Casa Lleó Morera, Barcelona, by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, 1905-1906. Gable of the Casa Amatller, Barcelona, by Josep Puig i Cadafalch, 1898-1900. Two views of the Sant Pau hospital, Barcelona, by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, 1902-1912. Vistabella Church, Tarragona, by Josep María Jujol, 1918-1923.

Modernist Barcelona

BY ALBERT GARCIA ESPUCHE

Bracelet by Lluís Masriera, 1900.

WHEN Barcelona's ancient fortifications were torn down in the late nineteenth century to provide much-needed room for the city to expand, the vast open spaces around the old city became the site for development that made a major contribution to the history of modern town planning.

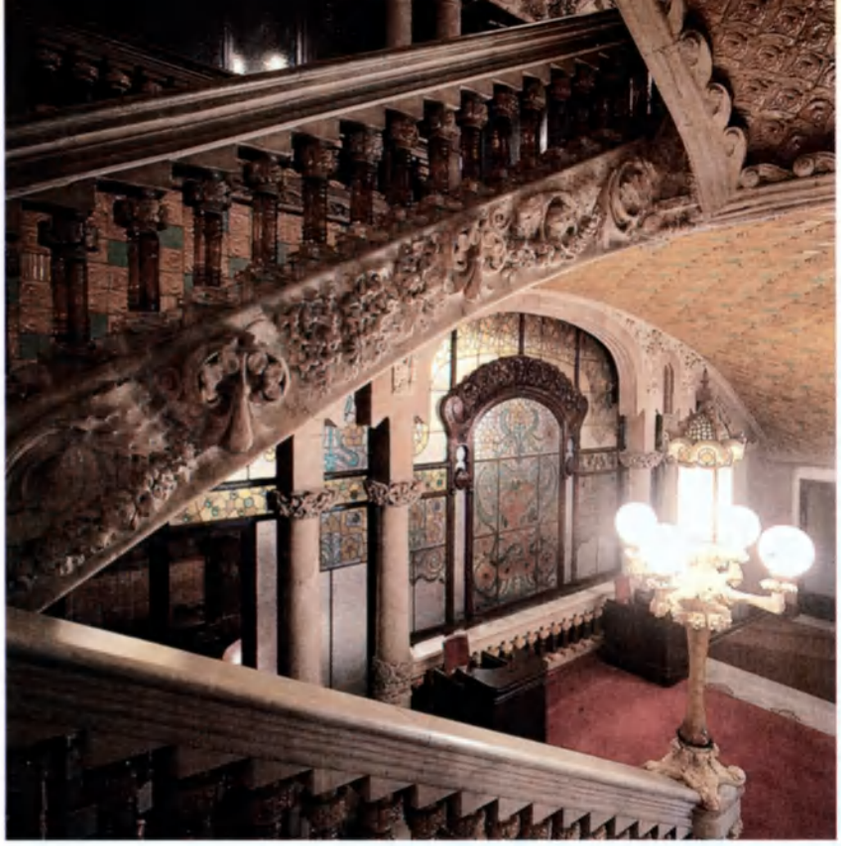
In the 1870s the new Barcelona began to take shape with the construction of a middle-class residential area around the famous Paseo de Gracia thoroughfare. The transformation and development of this part of the city mark the emergence of Modernism *(Modernismo)*, the Catalan version of Art Nouveau.

By 1900, the high-water mark of Modernism, the new city had already been mapped out. Around the centre known as the Eixample (the Paseo de Gracia and the streets nearby) with its prestige buildings, were a number of cheaper housing schemes, large buildings such as hospitals, prisons, and abattoirs, and an industrial estate.

In this area, Modernism found full expression in major urban complexes such as the Sant Pau hospital on the outskirts, and, in the centre, in the development of the elegant area around the Paseo de Gracia which came to be known as the "Quadrat d'Or" ("Golden Rectangle"). Much private housing was built. Some apartment blocks, such as Gaudí's Casa Milà (1905-1910), popularly known as *La Pedrera* ("The Quarry") replaced earlier buildings.

But as well as designing new apartment blocks, Modernist architects transformed, improved and embellished existing buildings. The famous Modernist residences in the Paseo de Gracia such as the Casa Lleó Morera, the Casa Amatller and the Casa Batlló, designed by the architects Lluís Domènech i Montaner, Josep Puig i Cadafalch and Antoní Gaudí respectively, were conversions of earlier buildings. Luxury shops built on the ground floors of older houses were another expression of this trend.

One striking feature of the new style was its propensity to invade all forms of aesthetic expression. At the turn of the century, the exuberant inventions



Palau de la Música Catalana, by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, 1905-1908: above, staircase; left, mosaic ceiling (detail).
Below left, detail of mosaic ceiling by Josep Pey, Casa Lleó Morera, Barcelona.
Below right, settee by Joan Busquets i Jané, 1902.

of Modernism formed the setting of middle-class life in Barcelona, and fine Modernist paintings, drawings and sculptures by Catalan artists such as Ramon Casas, Santiago Rusiñol and Juan Llimona can still be admired in the city's museums today.

The ornate interiors created by Modernist architects gave the impression that the refined and ornamental treatment of the façades had spilled over into interior walls and ceilings. Floors, ceilings, chimney-pieces, doors, windows and other features were all designed and made with meticulous craftsmanship. Tables, beds, cupboards, screens and other furnishings were perfectly integrated into their setting, together with other decorative elements such as carpets, lamps and door-knobs.

The leading Modernist architects excelled at creating such "total" environments. They enlisted the collaboration of specialized artists and craftsmen who under their direction produced a consistent output of work that was as robust and exciting in its overall design as in its component parts. The Palau de la Música Catalana and the Sant Pau hospital designed by Lluís Domènech i Montaner and his team are impressive examples of this approach.

But architects such as Domènech and his contemporaries Gaudí, Cadafalch, Rafael Masó, and Josep María Jujol revealed even more astonishing skills when they produced "total" works of art in more modest settings. The Casa Lleó Morera is an outstanding example of this. On a small triangular site with uneven contours, Domènech i Montaner was faced with the difficult task of embellishing an existing building and transforming it into a representative example of the new style. He made imaginative use of the site and directed the work of artists and craftsmen who designed all the external and internal features, from stained-glass windows and sculptures to tiling and furniture. The result was a marvellous transformation of a small non-descript building into a palace.

There are many examples of the outstanding skills of Catalan Modernist architects and craftsmen. In Gaudí's *La Pedrera* it is impossible not to admire the ingenuity with which the stucco ceilings and stone pillars were designed by his collaborator Josep María Jujol, a man who could make a humble brass inkstand that was a small masterpiece. ■

ALBERT GARCIA ESPUCHE, Catalan historian of architecture, is the author of a number of publications including studies of urban space and society in pre-industrial Barcelona (1984), and the architecture and design of the 1888 Universal Exhibition in Barcelona (1989).

A Cuban mythology

BY ENRIQUE CAPABLANCA

Entrance hall of the Museum of Pharmacy, old city of Havana, early 20th century.

MOST of the masons, stonecutters, blacksmiths, carpenters and other craftsmen who came from overseas and settled in Cuba between 1902 and 1930 were of Spanish, mainly Catalan, origin. They brought with them their traditions, styles and techniques, and it would be hard to overemphasize their role in the development of Cuban Art Nouveau. At first the new trend was even known by its Catalan name, *Modernismo,* and only several decades after its introduction did the expression "Art Nouveau" come into use.

Although the direct Catalan influence was undeniable, young local architects and craftsmen were avid readers of foreign periodicals which made them familiar with the main currents of Art Nouveau and its variants. However, distance tended to blur perceptions of the new style, which was often modified

ENRIQUE CAPABLANCA, Cuban architect and sculptor, is a staff member of the National Centre of Conservation, Restoration and Museology, Cuba, and teaches at the University of Havana.

Above, headquarters of the "Golden Sceptre" company in central Havana.
Below, an example of colonial architecture, one of the sources of inspiration for Cuban Art Nouveau.

through contact with another world and a different architectural tradition.

Because of a failure to clearly understand the nature of the movement, any building heavily decorated with flowers and garlands was initially described as Art Nouveau. Most of these buildings were actually a compromise between the new aesthetic and *fin-de-siècle* eclecticism, which sometimes worked surprisingly well. But the features and forms characteristic of the new style were soon recognized and began to appear in the streets of Havana and the other major towns, especially in private residences. Art Nouveau motifs were rarely seen in public buildings, perhaps because the style was considered too frivolous to represent the young republic in an appropriate fashion.

Cuban Art Nouveau is heavily indebted to French, Belgian, Italian and Catalan models. But it also has its own originality. European influences were rapidly assimilated because they had certain affinities with Cuban culture. Composite arches, dynamic curves, a taste for coloured ceramics and glass, and elaborately-wrought ironwork, were long-established features of the Cuban architectural heritage.

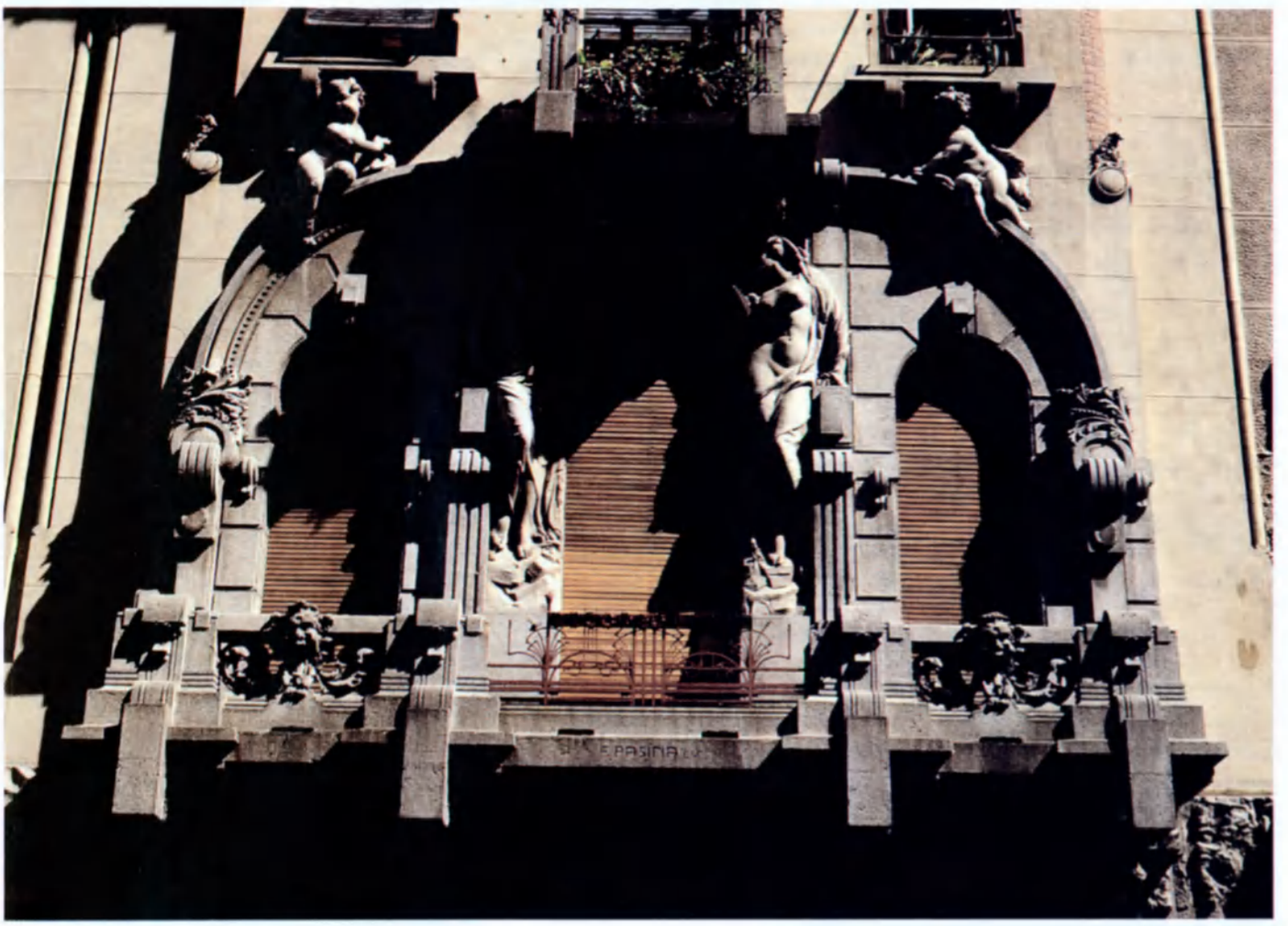
Like many of its European models, the Cuban variant of Art Nouveau is a blend of styles, and it is not unusual to see neo-Gothic, neo-Mudejar and other historicist elements amicably rubbing shoulders in many Cuban Art Nouveau buildings. Another characteristic is the use of sculpted animal and human forms, as well as plant motifs, to depict a kind of mythology unique to Havana.

The popularity of Art Nouveau in Cuba was not due to a small number of architects, but to a multitude of craftsmen who worked in the building trade and created architectural features which were then mass produced and used on hundreds of façades all over the island.

Some of these building contractors were so successful that Art Nouveau was soon regarded as a speciality of master masons and consequently as a minor form of architecture. The next step was to disparage the movement, and it was taken in the 1920s when art historians and critics dismissed it as exaggerated and decadent. Architects concerned about their reputation began to turn their backs on Art Nouveau, and some of those who had contributed to its rise turned towards more classical and conventional styles. ■

An aesthetic revolution

BY JORGE O. GAZANEO



AROUND the turn of the century, the new visual and structural language of Art Nouveau won a following among many young Latin American intellectuals who had studied in Paris, Brussels, Berlin and Barcelona, and among a prosperous middle class whose members were frequent visitors to these and other European cities.

One South American country in which it found a particularly receptive terrain was Argentina, where its products found favour with an élite of rural and city landowners, bankers, merchants and investors. Some members of this élite were descended from families established in Argentina since the late eighteenth century, but most came of more recent immigrant stock and belonged to an expanding well-to-do middle class of first-generation Argentines. Many of them would become key reformist and modernizing figures in politics, the economy and the arts.

Argentina at the beginning of this century was a democratic, progressive society in the throes of change.

Above, façade of a house in Buenos Aires by Virgilio Colombo.
Right, entrance to 29 avenue Rapp, Paris, by Jules Lavirotte, 1901. Sculpture and ornamentation by Larrivée and Bigot.

In the late nineteenth century the country had been host to large-scale immigration from Europe and a massive infusion of foreign investment. There had been a railway boom, major irrigation projects had been undertaken, and residential areas had been constructed for a burgeoning middle class employed in government, commerce, industry and banking. A new generation was coming to the fore with political ideas that were more outward-looking than those of the old Creole Spanish-colonial families which had painfully constructed the republic.

Settlers and investors were welcomed by the host society, especially in the port areas of Buenos Aires, Rosario and Bahia Blanca, and by the end of the century the original identity of these cities had been modified to the point where their colonial roots had almost vanished. Buenos Aires in particular was an emporium of banking and finance, the hub of government and state employment. It was in these urban areas that Art Nouveau flourished.

Recent studies suggest that the coming of Art Nouveau was part of a wider intellectual trend in Argentine society in the late nineteenth century. As one historian has written, "when in 1885 or thereabouts some of the more thoughtful young intellectuals directed their interests to socialism and politics, others chose to engage in the fight for the renewal of the arts". Just as there were political links between the Partido Socialista Argentino and the Belgian Workers Party, there were also aesthetic links between Argentina and the Brussels group La Libre Esthétique and the periodical *L'Art Moderne*, both of which played an important role in the genesis and diffusion of Art Nouveau. Preserved in the library of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Buenos Aires are collections of European periodicals which popularized new trends in the arts, such as *The Studio, Art et Décoration* and *La Revue des Arts Décoratifs*, also suggesting that the adepts of the new style were well informed and connected with their European colleagues.

Argentine architects and decorators imported building materials in bulk from Europe, mainly from France and Belgium. Complete sets of furniture came from the Belgian architect Gustave Serrurier-Bovy; mirrors, stained glass, bronze and ivory from Lalique and Gallé; iron structures from Usines Eiffel. Space was handled in accordance with what European masters had accomplished using the new technical resources that had emerged from the Industrial Revolution. Buildings were more open to the air and sun since the use of iron made it possible to design wide openings in what had formerly been exclusively load-bearing walls. The colours of new materials such as majolica and iridescent glass offered local craftsmen a range of decorative possibilities never seen before. The results were exciting and eye-catching when compared to the prevalent drab Victorian or French Empire styles, and rich in pastel colours. Today most of these interiors have disappeared or look diminished as parts of the furnishings have been dispersed or replaced with unsuitable intrusions.

The aesthetic impact of Art Nouveau was destined to be short-lived in Latin America where, a late response to the Belle Epoque way of life, it faded away after the First World War. ■

Above, the corner of this Buenos Aires building, by J.J. García Nuñez, is reminiscent of the Hôtel Tassel in Brussels (detail, right), designed by Victor Horta in 1893.

JORGE O. GAZANEO,
Argentine architect and member of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), teaches at the Belgrano University and at the University of Buenos Aires.

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Population and the environment

World population is increasing by 3 people every second—about a quarter of a million each day—faster than at any point in history. The highest rate of demographic growth is in developing countries. This increase could have catastrophic consequences for the environment, warns the 1990 report from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), which suggests action in three major areas: change from fossil fuels to renewable resources such as wind and solar energy; halt deforestation; and slow down population growth.

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The first flower

A 120-million-year-old fossil just over 2 cm long may be the ancestor of today's flowering plants, according to researchers at Yale University (USA). The fossil, unearthed a decade ago in Australia, was thought to be that of a non-flowering fern. High-resolution photography has now shown it to be a portion of a branch from an angiosperm, a plant whose seeds are enclosed in an ovary. This discovery may be the "missing link" which will explain the apparently sudden appearance, in evolutionary terms, of large flowering plants.

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Simón Bolívar Prize

Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia, has been awarded the International Simón Bolívar Prize for 1990. The $25,000 prize, established in 1983, is awarded every two years by the Director-General of Unesco. Its purpose is to reward activity of outstanding merit which has contributed to the freedom, independence and dignity of peoples and to the strengthening of a new international economic, social and cultural order, in accordance with the ideals of Simón Bolívar, the Venezuelan Liberator. Such activity may take the form of intellectual or artistic creation, a social achievement or the mobilization of public opinion. Former laureates include King Juan Carlos of Spain and Nelson Mandela, who was awarded the prize during his imprisonment.

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Spanish gold

A gold ingot, not much bigger than a chocolate bar but weighing 680 g, has been salvaged from a Spanish galleon wrecked off south-west Florida. The wreck is thought to be part of a treasure-laden convoy of ships that set sail from Havana in 1622, nine of which were destroyed in a hurricane. The ingot was brought to the surface by an ultra-sophisticated underwater recovery vehicle, a remote-controlled computerized machine with the capacity to map, film and pick up objects as small as a grape pip.

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Letters from the Americas

A 16th-century manuscript copy of unpublished correspondence from Christopher Columbus to the Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella has recently come to light. Historians consider these letters, in which Columbus describes his voyages of exploration, to be a valuable contribution to the 500th anniversary of the European discovery of the Americas, to be commemorated in 1992. The correspondence has now been published, with an accompanying volume of critical study, by the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Testimonio Compañia Editorial, Madrid, as part of the "Tabula Americae" collection on the discovery and the encounter between two worlds.

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Spanish-American co-production

Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain, the legendary royal couple who were granted the title of "Catholic sovereigns" by Pope Alexander VI, are to be the subjects of an ambitious Spanish-American television series in 6 episodes. The 15-million-dollar co-production, in English, aims to paint a historically accurate picture of 15th-century Spain. The noted American scriptwriter for the series, James Goldman, will be advised by Spanish historians. Filming will take place entirely in Spain and is expected to be completed by 1992.

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Frogs sound the alarm

Zoologists all over the world are alarmed by the rapid decline of the frog population in several regions of the United States, Canada, Australia and in some European countries such as the UK, Denmark, Poland and Hungary. The cause of the frogs' disappearance is thought to be climate changes brought about by degradation of the environment, acid rain, and pollution by herbicides and pesticides. According to Pere Alberch, director of the Natural History Museum in Madrid and a specialist on amphibians, frogs are hypersensitive to climate changes and their declining numbers should be seen as a warning.

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The birth of a dinosaur

Spanish researchers have reconstituted the skeleton of a hitherto unknown type of dinosaur from fossilized bones found at Lérida, in the southern foothills of the Pyrenees. *Pararhabdodon isonense,* a herbivore of the Iguanodon family, lived some 65 million years ago. It was 5 metres long, had very short forelimbs and walked on its hind legs. Palaeontologists are particularly interested in this discovery because it dates from the late Secondary Era, when dinosaurs were virtually extinct.

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Children's rights

After ten years of preparation, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations on 20 November 1989. For the first time in the history of international law, children's rights have been codified in the form of a treaty which will be legally binding on signatory states. The Convention modifies and consolidates the existing standards on children's rights and introduces a range of new issues of major importance. Its provisions cover anyone under 18 except in countries where legal majority is attained earlier. The Convention will enter into force when 20 countries have ratified it. To date there are 7 signatories (Ghana, Viet Nam, the Vatican, Belize, Guatemala, Ecuador, France).

UNESCO AND 'ARCHITECTURE WITH A SMILE'

BY HANS-DIETER DYROFF

NINETEEN countries* are today co-operating in a Unesco project to study and protect the architectural heritage of Art Nouveau and *Jugendstil*—described at a recent meeting of specialists as "architecture with a smile".

The notion of cultural dialogue, today a central feature of Unesco's programme, was already foreshadowed in the Art Nouveau movement. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Hungarian town of Kecskemet, where the seeds of the Unesco project were sown at a meeting of specialists held in 1985. Kecskemet has a number of magnificent buildings dating from the turn of the century, including a town hall designed by the Hungarian architect Odön Lechner (1845-1914). Though uniquely Hungarian, these buildings are also the product of a closely knit network of international influences and exchanges, and bear witness to a powerful movement whose dynamics spread not only through the countries of Europe but also to other continents.

The Art Nouveau project soon generated great interest. The German National Commission for Unesco in Bonn, which acted as co-ordinator, drew up an initial plan which won wide approval at Unesco's General Conference in 1985. The following year, a group of European specialists met at Heiligkreuztal in the Federal Republic of Germany and defined Art Nouveau architecture for the purposes of the project—a difficult task in view of the great diversity of creators and processes involved. They adopted a definition which was broad enough to include not only the work of leading figures who set out to use a combination of artistic skills in order to create "all-inclusive works of art" but also the contributions of less well-known architects and builders many of whom played an important role, whether in shaping urban districts or in helping the transmission of Art Nouveau internationally.

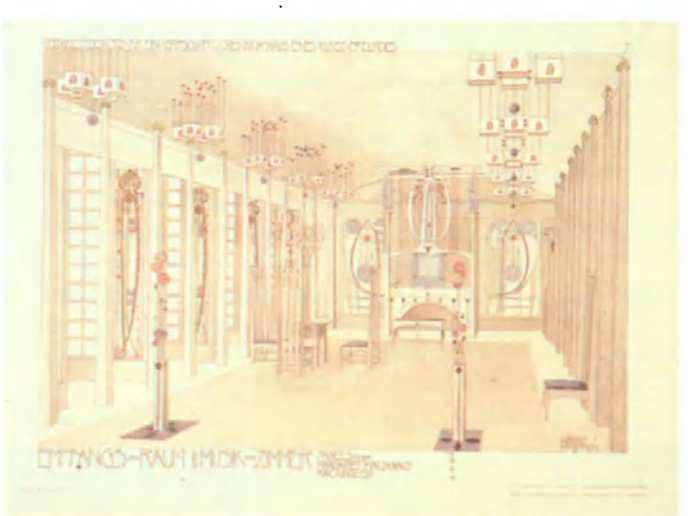
The next stage was to assemble and evaluate information about Art Nouveau buildings as a basis for possible preservation work. A fund of information about international exchanges, building techniques and especially the experimental use of new materials at the turn of the century has gradually been created. As far as the spread of Art Nouveau is concerned, it would be impossible to emphasize too strongly the influence exercised by popular illustrated periodicals such as the German magazine *Jugend*, which made extensive use of photographs to document new trends in architecture and the arts. Not surprisingly, therefore, one important activity of the Unesco project is the assembling of photographic documentation on Art Nouveau buildings and on efforts being made to preserve them. The Unesco National Commission of the German Democratic Republic has already mounted an exhibition which has so far been shown in its country of origin, in Finland and in the Federal Republic of Germany. The other countries participating in the project intend to prepare similar exhibitions.

There are many reasons for the growing interest in the project. One of them is the fascination exercised by an age in which the development of new engineering tools and techniques, the expansion of transport and communication, and belief in progress, gave a strong impetus to architectural and aesthetic innovations. Another is a general revival of interest in the work of great architects such as Henry van de Velde, Hermann Obrist, Otto Wagner, Eliel Saarinen and many others.

A considerable amount of expertise and knowledge has by now been accumulated, ranging from bibliographies reflecting the current state of research in different countries, to lists of monuments, experts, firms, materials and other information. The Unesco project group is now ready to offer its advice and assistance to specific conservation operations, fully aware that its co-operation in such efforts can only be based on the initiative and involvement of local groups. ■

* Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, the German Democratic Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia

HANS-DIETER DYROFF, German art historian, is director of the cultural section at the German National Commission for Unesco in Bonn (Fed Rep of Germany). He is the co-ordinator of Unesco's international joint study and action project on Art Nouveau/Jugendstil architecture



Drawing board dreams: realization, restoration, destruction

Far left, music room of the "House for an Art Lover", designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1901 for an architectural competition launched by a Darmstadt magazine. Mackintosh's project is to be realized at last—the house is now being built at Glasgow. Left, design for the Valtionhotelli (west façade) at Imatra, Finland, by Usko Nyström, 1903-1905. This hotel complex has recently been meticulously restored. Right and far right, interiors of the Valtionhotelli after restoration. Above, Art Nouveau motif on the main façade of August Endell's Elvira photography studio, Munich, which was demolished in 1944

'A TERRIFYING AND EDIBLE BEAUTY'

BY EZIO GODOLI

Above and opposite page, left to right: cover design by André Derain for *Minotaure* magazine, No. 3-4, 1933, which featured an article by Salvador Dalí on Modern Style architecture. Four aspects of Antoni Gaudí's work in Barcelona: balcony, Casa Batlló, 1904-1906; dragon sculpture and pavilion, Güell Park, 1900-1906; ornamental chimney, Güell Palace, 1910.

ART Nouveau architecture in Latin Europe embraced such a wide range of styles, even within individual countries, that it is hard to find a common denominator between them.

It spread like a language, like a lingua franca that was enriched by contact with and borrowings from local dialects, but kept unchanged certain elements of syntax. A form of architecture intent on collaboration with all the figurative and decorative arts, it could call on a wide diversity of artistic traditions. Its composite nature and its variety were due as much to its cosmopolitan tendencies as to a desire to extend the traditional repertoire of regional or national art forms.

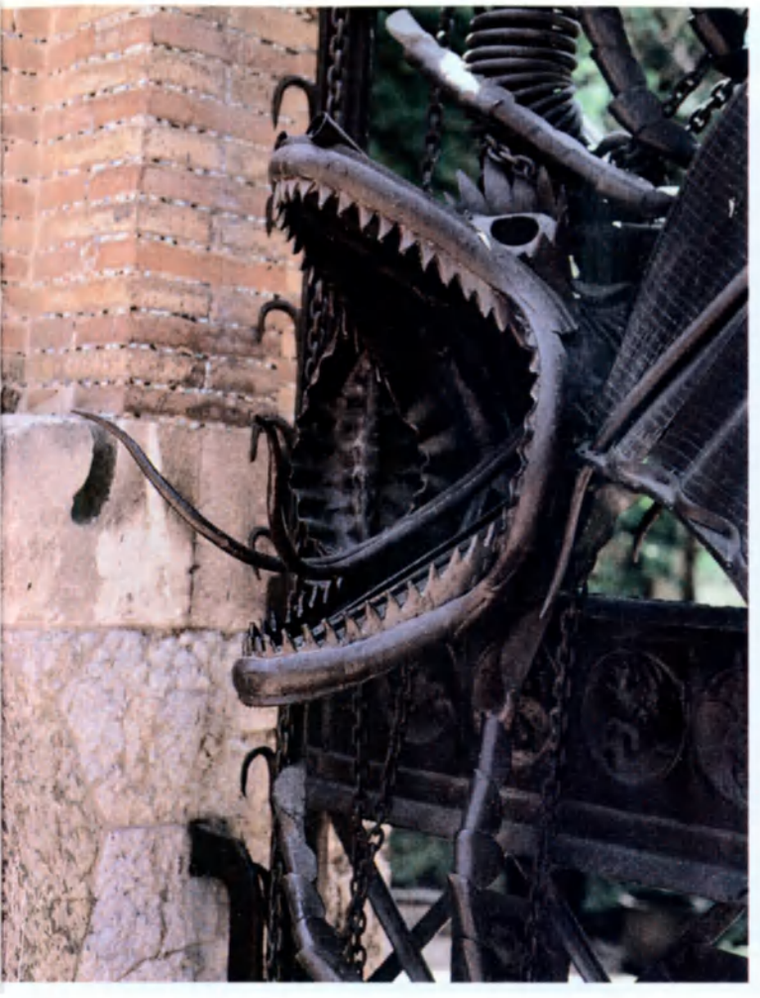
Art Nouveau architecture developed somewhat later in the Latin countries than elsewhere in Europe and, with the exception of Catalan Modernism, in which the early stirrings of a desire to affirm national identity can be detected, there were no strong local movements to help it on its way.

Although it would be vain to try to discover a common stylistic thread linking the Latin countries of Europe (with the possible exceptions perhaps of Spain and Portugal), the poetics of their distinct architectural languages do share certain common features which may help us define some essentially Latin characteristics of Art Nouveau architecture.

This line of approach was first suggested by Salvador Dalí in one of the earliest and most penetrating assessments of Art Nouveau architecture, his essay *On the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Modern Style Architecture,* which was published in 1933 in the Parisian surrealist magazine *Minotaure*.

With this provocative appraisal of Art Nouveau architecture made in the mid-1930s, at a time when the rest of the world subscribed to the theories of rationalist architecture, Dalí issued a double message which historians should take into account. Drawing from the poetics of Art Nouveau those elements most readily assimilable by surrealist art, he declared firmly that, between Art Nouveau and the twentieth-century avant-gardes, there was a network of inter-relationships far more complex than most historians admit. By emphasizing the most "alogical", almost "demential" aspects of Art Nouveau architecture, he showed that, to fully understand the contribution of Art Nouveau to modern art and architecture, those works most tainted with bad taste should not be ignored. Highly significant artistic statements can even be found by rummaging through these artistic rejects.

Some Art Nouveau buildings in Paris and Barcelona possess the

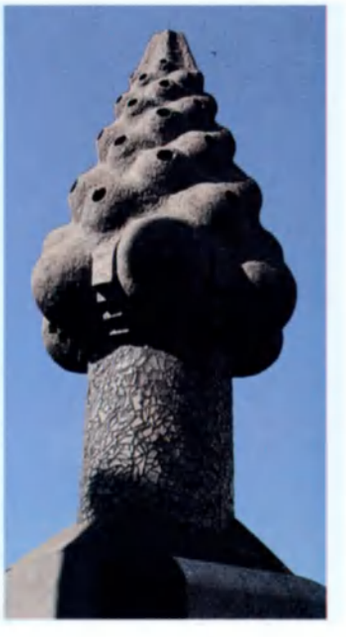


"terrifying and edible beauty" of which Dalí wrote (among the examples used to illustrate the *Minotaure* article were works by Guimard, Jules Lavirotte and Gaudí). The values highlighted by Dalí are found not only in Catalan and Parisian Art Nouveau architecture but also in that of other Latin regions. This is particularly true of the quality of "movement which...is primarily intended to arouse a kind of great 'primeval hunger' ", like "the ultimate, ideal architecture which would embody the most tangible and delirious goal of hypermaterialism... not only because it denounces the violent materialistic banality of immediate needs..., but also because it unashamedly alludes to the nutritive, edible nature of houses of this type, which are nothing other than the first edible houses, the first and only erogenous buildings whose existence is an affirmation of that 'functional' trigger of the amorous imagination—to be able in the realest possible sense to eat the object of desire."

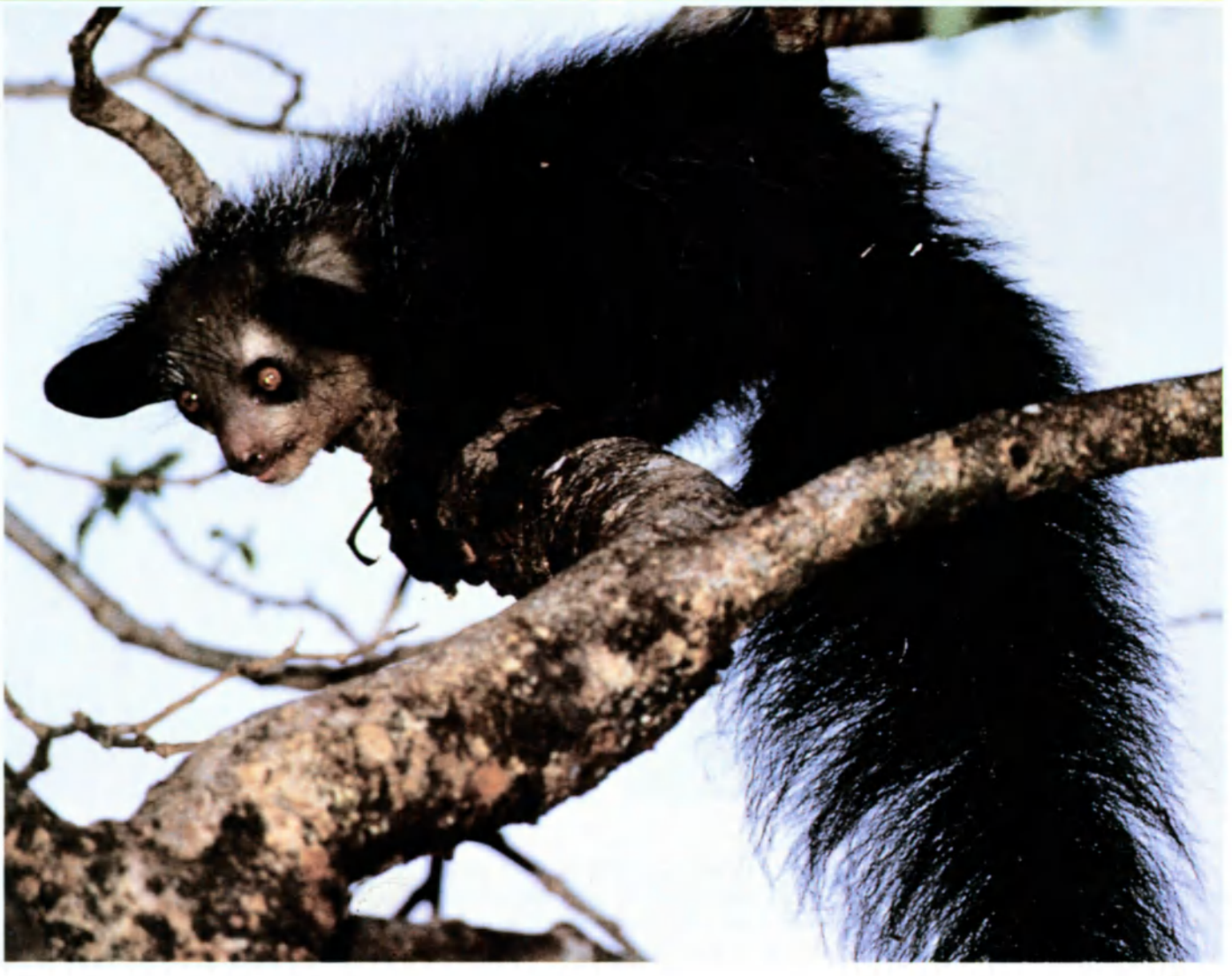
Is not this need for "hypermaterialism", given metaphorical expression in the art of cooking, the thread that links certain Paris buildings by S. Wagon and Paul Auscher, whose florid ornamentation calls to mind some elaborate piece of confectionery, to those works of Gaudí which are decorated with ceramics as some cakes are decorated with crystallized fruit? Is it not also this same need that links the subtle erotic allusions of certain Modernist Catalan architects to the unabashed trivialities of Lavirotte's building in the Avenue Rapp, in Paris, or to some of the more fantastic projects of the Italian architect Adolfo Coppedé?

Is not the revolutionary architectural framework that Gaudí, thanks to his remarkable knowledge of construction techniques, introduced in some of his buildings (one has only to think of *La Pedrera,* which seems to defy the laws of gravity, or of the prolific Doric colonnades of the Güell Park) in some respects a unique manifestation of "the profound devaluation of intellectual systems"?

And is it not in the Latin countries that we find the most eye-catching examples of ornamental excess, of "hysterical sculpture", of the multiple metamorphoses of Baroque/Art Nouveau and Rococo/Art Nouveau pastiche, from which all sense of restraint is absent? Are not the dragons of a fantastic Orient refashioned by Gaudí's imagination, or the strange cast-iron fauna evoking the world of the ocean depths and recalling the sculptured gargoyles of Gothic cathedrals, that adorn Guimard's buildings and lend their forms to his entrances to the Paris Metro, virtually unique examples, in the European context, of that incursion into the fantastic world of dreams, that return to infancy of which Dalí speaks? ■



EZIO GODOLI, Italian art historian, is professor of the history of architecture at the University of Florence. He has published a number of works on Art Nouveau, including *Vienna, 1900* (with F Borsi, Lund Humphries, London, 1986), *Paris, 1900* (with F Borsi, Rizzoli International Publications, USA, 1988), and a dictionary of Art Nouveau and Symbolist illustrators (with G Fanelli, Florence, 1990)



S.O.S. lemurs! A new biosphere reserve in Madagascar

BY EDOUARD BAILBY

AMONG the attractions of the Paris zoo in the Bois de Vincennes is a group of unusual animals whose family, the lemurians, is in danger of extinction in its natural habitat. Lemurians are prosimian primates whose rarest species is the aye-aye, which is about 40 centimetres long. Arboreal mammals with large marble-like eyes, forward-facing ears, and long bushy tails, lemurians are found in their natural state only on the island of Madagascar, where they arrived 35 million years ago from Africa.

In the study of evolution, lemurians are to Madagascar what the finches, on which Charles Darwin based one of his major arguments for his theory of natural selection, are to the Galapagos islands. They are an inexhaustible source of information. Unfortunately, their existence is threatened because they are being deprived of their natural habitat by man-made forest fires, the extent of which has been revealed by satellite photographs. This is an ecological catastrophe fraught with many consequences. In ten years at most no lemurians will be left if nothing is done to protect them.

To avoid this irreparable outcome, Unesco has recently approved the creation of a biosphere reserve at Mananara on the east coast of the island, at the request of the Malagasy authorities. In the next few years four more reserves will be created in the hinterland. Thanks to large-scale

financial assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the European Economic Community and the Federal Republic of Germany, $10 million will be invested in the project, which is bound to have economic and social consequences. In addition, thanks to Unesco scholarships, young Malagasy have begun to follow training courses which will enable them to take an active part in the scheme.

Dr. Jean-Jacques Petter, who is responsible for the conservation of animal species at the Vincennes zoo, is in charge of the technical aspects of the project. A medical doctor by training, Dr. Petter has been carrying out research in Madagascar for thirty years. He talks with enthusiasm and affection of a country he knows well but at the same time does not conceal the gravity of the situation.

"Every year," he says, "300,000 hectares of forest are destroyed by fire in Madagascar. This phenomenon is not unique to the island. We are familiar with devastating fires in the South of France, many of criminal origin. In the case of Madagascar, all the same, they have particularly dramatic consequences since each year some 200,000 lemurs, 200,000 sifakas and 600,000 members of other animal species disappear."

One factor in this complex problem is Madagascar's very high rate of demographic growth. The average family has eight children. Rural populations practise slash and burn subsistence farming and grow rice or maize in forest clearings. Unfortunately the soil is crystalline and soon ceases to be fertile. After a few years nothing grows, and the villagers burn more forest. Such widespread forest burning eventually has an impact on the climate. On the east coast rainfall is less abundant than it was.

The systematic destruction of the forest, which a Malagasy proverb wrongly maintains is eternal, also causes the loss of many plant species which are only found in Madagascar and to which the existence of the lemurians and other animal species is closely linked. The primitive plant and animal life of Madagascar is of great scientific interest and should be strictly protected if only because Madagascar has been separated from the continent of Africa for tens of millions of years and its ecosystems are unique.

"At Mananara," Dr. Petter explains, "we began to make the local people aware of the problem a few years ago. Thanks to the existing village structures we gradually succeeded in signing contracts with the villagers to safeguard the forest. With the exception of a few die-hards, we are now sure that the 20,000 inhabitants of the surrounding region will cease to burn these 40,000 hectares of fine forest."

In exchange for their co-operation, the villagers benefit from a development programme which will intensify as a result of the transformation of Mananara into a biosphere reserve. Irrigation projects will be launched, small dams will be

Left, an aye-aye, the rarest species of lemurian. Below, aerial view of the Mananara biosphere reserve on the east coast of Madagascar.

built, new crops will be introduced, and sheep and goat farming increased. Fish-farming, apiculture and animal vaccination programmes will also be carried out. In addition the villagers will be provided with schools and dispensaries which will encourage them to settle in one place. In a word, a partnership between man and Nature will become possible. Dr. Petter summed up the policy as follows: "To protect the lemurs is to protect the Malagasy."

As the most recent biosphere reserve to be inaugurated by Unesco, Mananara stands to gain from experience accumulated in other reserves in the humid tropics. Like other biosphere reserves, two-thirds of which are located in industrially developed countries, Mananara consists of three zones: a strictly protected core area; a carefully delineated buffer zone destined for research, education and environmental training activities, as well as leisure activities and tourism; and a transition area where efforts are made to encourage co-operation between researchers, managers, and the local population, with a view to promoting long-term development of the region's resources while fully respecting the aims of the reserve.

The director of Unesco's Division of Ecological Sciences, Mr. Bernd Von Droste, believes that the purpose of biosphere reserves goes far beyond the material aspects of development. He sees the reserves as a cultural enterprise in the widest sense of the term and a justification of international solidarity. Of fundamental importance for the future of humanity, they are what J. Ronald Engel of the University of Chicago has called "sacred spaces". By associating the protection of animal and plant life with the economic and social development of local populations, they contribute to the conservation of biological diversity, genetic resources and ecosystems.

The 286 biosphere reserves in 72 countries play a key role in Unesco's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. Created in 1971, MAB seeks to provide the scientific basis for the study of problems related to the wise use of resources, by associating in each case the local populations who are directly concerned. National MAB committees have been created in over a hundred countries and work in close association with the Unesco Secretariat.

The financial resources of the MAB programme are still very modest. Perhaps the story of the lemurians of Madagascar, whose name is of Latin origin and means "the spirits of the dead", will help to awaken the conscience of mankind. ■

EDOUARD BAILBY, French journalist and former foreign correspondent on the weekly magazine *L'Express,* served for a number of years with the Unesco Office of Public Information

A United Nations documentary film crew at Mananara.

Letters to the Editor

Money and the emergence of humanity

"The need for a form of money to serve as a medium of exchange arose at a very early stage in history..." says the editorial of your January 1990 issue, *The Fortunes of Money*.

This statement raises several questions. When and why did this need become apparent? Why did man feel the need to set a value on goods and services, to pay for them, and save?

Ali Boulhabel
Grenoble (France)

These are fundamental questions in the human and social sciences, and the following brief comments cannot pretend to answer them completely.

Exchange, like the use of forms of money, is associated with the gradual emergence of humanity from the animal state. The concept of exchange should not be reduced to that of the market (the process of making reciprocal gifts is a form of exchange, and the commodities involved in an exchange may be imaginary). Nor should the currency of these ancient societies be confused with the rudimentary instruments of the "primitive" market —money is primarily a means of normalizing social relations, and trade is only one field in which it is used. Moreover, in "primitive" societies, the basic functions of money—as a medium of expressing prices and values and as a means of payment—are more than just economic. As Karl Polanyi has shown, economic relations in such societies are closely linked to kinship systems, political alliances, beliefs and cults.

It is tempting to imagine that the first exchanges were made principally to procure the goods necessary for survival, but this does not seem to have been the case. Anthropological studies have shown that man can survive in surroundings that are *a priori* ecologically unfavourable, and that "primitive" forms of exchange primarily involve goods that do not play a fundamental role in biological reproduction. Such forms of exchange are, however, important instruments for defining differences in social status, between men and women, the older and younger members of families, and so on.

Hierarchies and dominance relationships between human beings are not modern inventions—they are found in "primitive" societies and even exist in primate groups. The development of forms of exchange and money as instruments for defining and standardizing social distinctions is a process that bears witness to the emergence of humanity.

Jean-Michel Servet
University of Lyon II (France)

A 12th-century *Song of Roland?*

I enjoyed reading the two issues of the *Courier* on historiography, but I was puzzled by one of the illustrations in the April issue, *The Making of History*. The photo in question shows a scene from a film of the medieval French epic "The Song of Roland", apparently the knights' departure for Spain. This episode actually took place around 778 AD, but the knights in the photo are standing in front of a church doorway which has a Gothic ogival arch! After considerable research I have been able to identify the church in the photo as that of Saint-Loup-de-Naud, near Provins (France), which dates from the 12th century...

In other words there is an anachronism of four centuries. Such inattention to historical detail by a film-maker is bound to confuse cinema-goers.

Pierre Nagant
Sambreville (Belgium)

Full marks for historical accuracy! But there is no anachronism. Franck Cassenti's film is actually set in the 12th century. It tells the story of a group of pilgrims and storytellers travelling to the shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela, Spain. When they halt on their journey the storytellers describe the exploits of Roland. According to Les 100 chefs-d'oeuvre du film historique *by Jean-Pierre Frimbois (Marabout, Belgium, 1989), this "outstandingly original film was misunderstood when it appeared".* Editor

Towards a non-polluted world

I have only recently discovered your fine magazine through two 1988 issues, *Man and Animals* and *The World Heritage: A Legacy for All*.

The Romanian ecological movement to which I belong is engaged in a struggle similar to your own. We would like to change our compatriots' view of nature, teach them to live in harmony and solidarity with everything in the cosmos, respecting the rights not only of man, but also of plants and animals. In order to survive and to progress, the human species needs a non-polluted environment and an understanding of the interrelationship between all living things. We must create a "clean" world in our own countries and elsewhere. We must see to the health of our minds as well as our physical health. He who enslaves another—man or animal—is not free.

Doctor Stefan Milicescu
Bucharest (Romania)

The biblical Genesis

In your May 1990 issue, *In the Beginning...Imagining the Birth of the Universe*, why didn't you publish an article on Genesis as it is described in the Bible? For thousands of men and women of different races and cultures this wonderful account still provides the answers to the really fundamental questions...

Marie-Laure Valero
Plan-de-Cuques (France)

When I read your issue on the origins of the universe, I was disappointed that there was nothing about the biblical Genesis. If only for its simplicity and grandeur, the story should have been considered. What a pity!

Delphine Gigon
(Switzerland)

The third class

I would like to point out an error in the otherwise excellent article on the Vedas which opens your May issue. Farmers do not belong to the fourth social division or caste, but to the third, the Vaisyas, of which they are the most important group because they provide food. These "twice-born" have access to the sacred books, that is to say, to the science of the mind.

J. Gabeur-Rasorre
Marseille (France)

Island hospitality

Your issue on *The Art of Hospitality* (February 1990) was first-rate, but I was sorry there was no article about the hospitality offered by island communities. One of the great qualities of islanders is the warm welcome they give to those who have come from far away. They take endless trouble to show visitors the beauties of their island and tell them about its history, customs and economic life.

Luis Balbuena Castellano
La Laguna, Tenerife
(Canary Islands)

Irony and Compassion

As a faithful *Courier* reader since 1956, I would like to make two points about the remarkable article by Octavio Paz in your June 1990 issue, *Winds of Freedom*.

First of all, as far as I am aware, Buddhism does not recognize pity but compassion, and the two should not be confused.

Secondly, I would like to draw readers' attention to the following passage from *The Epicure's Garden* (1895) by Anatole France:

"The more I think about human life, the more strongly I believe that Irony and Pity should be its witnesses and its judge.... Irony and Pity are two wise counsellors; the one, smiling, makes life pleasant; the other, weeping, makes it sacred. The Irony of which I speak is in no way cruel. It mocks neither love nor beauty. It is gentle and benevolent. Its laughter moderates anger, and it teaches us to scorn the wicked and the foolish, whom we may otherwise be weak enough to hate."

René Barbe
Montpellier (France)

THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE

A 'hunger for books'

BY PETER LLOYD

A "hunger for books" in developing countries is one of the cultural challenges of the age and "threatens to undermine efforts to promote universal literacy, education for all and access to culture".[1]

The situation is especially serious in Africa, which "through lack of funds and chronic foreign exchange constraints is becoming a tragically bookless society".[2] While in most developing countries the number of books published per million inhabitants grew slowly from 1960 and accelerated during the 1980s, in Africa this did not happen. Although the number of titles published in Africa almost doubled between 1960 and the end of the 1970s, it fell during the 1980s.

Apart from the fact that teachers and pupils in African schools often lack basic materials, many African academics are denied access to international research in their fields. A number of university libraries have cut their subscriptions to periodicals to a fifth of the level of the 1970s. New books cannot be purchased and are often unknown in the area to which they refer. Many local journals established in the 1960s and 1970s are no longer being published. African scholars are being increasingly marginalized. "A generation of students is now being taught by lecturers who are unable to gain access to current research and scholarship."[2]

Alleviating Africa's book famine is one of the major concerns of the International African Institute (IAI), an international non-governmental organization with consultative status at Unesco and UNICEF. The Institute seeks to publicize the results of research by African scholars both within and beyond the continent and facilitate their access to the work of Africanists in the rest of the world. It publishes directories, bibliographies, monographs on ethnology, history, sociology and linguistics.

The London-based IAI (formerly the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures) was founded in 1926 as a centre of information on African ethnology, linguistics and social sciences, to organize research in these fields and to present its results in a useful form.

The Institute is financed by members' dues and donations from governments and non-governmental bodies. It also receives research grants from African and European governments, foundations and Unesco. Members, both individual and corporate (universities, museums, libraries, bookshops, seminaries, governments and institutes) are drawn from some ninety countries.

The most prominent of the Institute's publications is the quarterly *Africa*, now in its sixtieth year and still one of the leading journals on African affairs and culture. It brings an inter-disciplinary approach to the social effects of development. Many of its contributors are African scholars, and even greater participation is being sought from them. The journal's policy is to give increased coverage to African publications in its book reviews and articles.

The Institute tries to make its publications available at moderate cost throughout Africa By organizing seminars, workshops and other projects, inviting donations and contributing to co-operation between publishers, it is attempting to break the vicious circle in which many African scholars are trapped. ■

International co-operation is founded on a network of daily contacts, exchanges and initiatives which create bonds of solidarity between men and women all over the world. In addition to the intergovernmental agencies of the United Nations system, hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) today form part of this network. These organizations exist thanks to the dedication of people with similar professional interests or common aims who wish to share their experience and combine their efforts. Our regular feature "Forum" gives them an opportunity to talk about their activities.

1 *Third Medium-Term Plan (1990-1995)*, Unesco, 1990
2. *The African Book World and Press. A Directory*, Hans M Zell Publishers, London, 4th edition 1988

The International African Institute
Lionel Robbins Building
10 Portugal Street
London WC 2A 2 HD

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43rd YEAR

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